



## 202 Hodgepodge

*...the completely  
disorganized thoughts of an idiotic  
scientist...*

by Dr. Joey Bone

Book three of ten books

# *Preface*

Some say that art is almost unavoidably insinuated into the mind of the artist. The creative product simply pushes its way into consciousness, but nothing akin to that occurred in the scripting of this monotonous tome, nor does this remotely qualify as ‘art.’ And although, I’d like to tell you that this mare’s nest of hen scratch is true or at least based on truth, unfortunately, it is complete fabrication, and nothing but pure invention. Please realize that this is a poorly written, highly disorganized anthology, filled with boring redundancies and far too many segues, so if you enjoy a steady train of logic, this is not the book for you. Literally and figuratively it more or less reflects how I think, and is filled with my: hopes, fears, gripes, failures, etc.

Make no mistake dear readers, not one iota of this windy amateurish scrape, not a single phrase, is remotely truthful. From cover to cover, this entire chalky slate is only dusty fiction. If you recognize anything herein, which you think remotely corresponds to reality, it is only coincidental, nothing more! That’s not to say that coincidence can’t be

remarkable. If we each had several more pounds of jiggly gray mush, we might come to realize that everything is coincidental.

[OBJ]



**THE MONSTER IN THE TRAP**

About two to three thousand years ago, a group of dark haired olive skinned seafarers, traversed the entire length of the Mediterranean from east to west. They traveled in a seven ships, each with a single rectangular sail, with a bow-stem adorned with a sculptured animal or serpent head. They cruised out into the terrifying endless Atlantic Ocean, then headed along what is now the coast of southwestern Spain.

These small ships had been painstakingly constructed, and in those days were probably perceived as a Nimitz class aircraft carrier is, today. The planking of the crafts were carefully hand carved and notched, in such a manner that each individual plank was firmly interlocked with its neighbor. Each plank fit so well into its neighboring plank, that they snapped into place almost like jinx-saw pieces, only they had been pounded into each other, using smooth wooden hammers, so as to not damage the surface of the wood. About one thousand years later, the vikings would build similar ships, though not as well crafted. In other words, they didn't invent the interlocking planking, the shallow draft, the rectangular sail, the rudder, the rigging, nor the sculptured figure on the bow-stem, and that

practically covers everything about those ships. The ancient guys who sailed from the east coast of the Mediterranean, made these innovations. However, the vikings did add oars, and sealable oar ports, for rowing in windless seas and rivers. Though probably not as creative as the Mediterranean guys, the vikings were far more aggressive.

[http://www.phoenician.org/ancient\\_ships.htm](http://www.phoenician.org/ancient_ships.htm)

These earlier Mediterranean sailors tended to cruise insight of the coast, for fear of falling off the edge of the earth. They 'knew' that if they were away from the land, and caught in a storm, they could be blown right off the edge of the flat world. No doubt this thinking, was partially owing to the fact that ships had been routinely sunk in storms, and people had wrongly imagined that the ship had been blown off the edge of the earth.

Once settled into the safe harbor, these ancient sailors were more than 3700 kilometers from their homeland, barely outside the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea. As stated, the seven ships made a right turn coming out of the Med, and about ten

hours later, they went to shore in a newly found bay on the eastern shore of the Atlantic. Hundreds of years later, the bay would be named the Bay of Cadiz. Historical rumor has it that the name 'Cadiz' was derived from the Caldean word "Gader," which literally signifies the 'boundaries of Hercules.'

On the northern interior shore of that bay, those ancient Mediterranean sailors constructed a large resourceful piece of marine engineering, a highly functional, long-lasting (to this day) fish-trap. It remains an ever dependable ingenious food resource. With the exception of during a storm, it never failed to provide fish, squid, and eels. Nevertheless, it has survived the poundings of countless storms for thousands of years, it still functioned, when I was there as a child. My family's home once sat on a ninety foot high cliff, overlooking that bay, when I was ten to fourteen years of age. The ancient settlement which grew-up around the fish-trap, originally was called Bailo Baelokun.

Those early marine engineers and seafarers had sailed from Phoenicia, a country, which first formed around 1550 BC, and was roughly located where now exists the western coast of modern day Lebanon. Phoenicia was inhabited by a nautically gifted

semitic peoples. Most of their history has been forever lost. Thousands of years ago, their colonies extended west through the Mediterranean, to just outside the Straits of Gibraltar, along the aforementioned southwestern coast of Spain, on the eastern shore of the Atlantic ocean, south of what is now Portugal. The ancient Phoenicians had preceded the Romans, in what is now Spain, by more than a thousand years! Where the Phoenicians stopped and colonized at the Bay of Cadiz, the Romans later took over, and moved farther north to also settle in England and Scotland.

In reality, it's likely that extremely clever primitive fish-trap was the western-most geographical representation of the early Phoenician empire. The surrounding US military base is still leased by America's Navy from Spain. As mentioned, the base is on the Bay of Cadiz, sandwiched between the towns of Rota and Puerto de Santa Maria, and named for Rota. It's an intriguing thought that those few ancient Phoenician seafarers had picked-out the exact same location to establish a strategic base of operation, as did the US Navy, but the Phoenicians had selected the place thousands of years, before Columbus had arrived in the new world, and with no

modern technology to assist them, not even a satellite. In fact, the compass didn't come along, until around 200 BC.

A few years ago, using one of the earlier *Google Earth* photos, I could still see the ancient fish-trap in the shallow waters of the navy base. In the satellite photo, the trap was partially submerged, probably due to high tide, yet visible, just inches under the surface of the clear water. Now, the photos appear to have been changed, but I can still barely make out the trap walls, underwater.

As a kid, the ancient trap was resourcefully simple, and worked beautifully, in the late 1950s. People who returned to the United States from that Navy base, about ten years ago, assured me that the trap was there and still functioning, but with global warming and the corresponding elevation of the oceans, the fish-trap may be now be permanently submerged; if so, it would no longer function to catch fish.

As young children, my friends and I frequently patrolled along the top of the horseshoe-shaped wall, spearing various fish, including the strange-looking cuddle fish (a squid like animal), as well as the vicious yellowish-brown motley colored toothy



moray eels. The ancient Phoenicians built the formidable stone u-shaped wall to be about two feet tall on its two ends, where they meant the beach, and the wall was roughly twelve feet high at its farthest point or apex out from the shore, where the water was deeper.

At various points, the primitive wall was around two to four feet thick. The two ends of the horseshoe were a few feet up onto the beach, and were about forty yards apart, and the U-shaped stone wall looped out into the bay, so that its apex extended out about sixty yards from the beach. These measurements are but rough guesses, since it has been over fifty-three years, since I put eyes on the trap, and it was difficult to judge the submerged trap's size from the *Google Earth* photo.

The trap wall had been engineered such that at high tide, the top of the wall was a few feet under water, and at low tide, the wall stuck-up two or three feet out of the water, allowing the ancient Phoenicians, as well as us kids, to walk out onto the wall, armed with spears (gigs) to catch the fish, which had been stranded inside the wall by the receding tide. The trap never failed to contain fish, but the number could vary tremendously.

Apparently, the primitive peoples understood tidal variance and knew how to structure the trap's wall to endure the ocean's poundings for thousands of years! Imagine a modern-day marine engineer, being told that he should design and build a marine structure, using hand-cut stones, and hand-mixed primitive concrete, and that during its construction half of the time, the device will be underwater; and finally, it must last for well over two thousand years and consistently function, without need of repairs or maintenance, regardless of water conditions, including periodically getting hit by powerful storms! Moreover, it had to be constructed out from the shore, where the storms and wave action could most severely hammer it. I can just imagine the commentary the modern day naysayer engineers would probably make. To be creative one must have something of a chaotic mind, and believe in doing the impossible. Most engineers and scientists are highly organized and apt to explain why something can't be done, rather than to experience the creative leap and see why something can be done. Experience has taught me that most scientists and engineers are pessimists. The reason is simple, for it is generally far easier to see why something might not work, and it's infinitely more difficult to create a new idea that will

work. Many people pride themselves on explaining why things can't be done, and somehow confuse those negative observations as an indication of abundant intelligence. In reality, they're just rather boring, unproductive folks, who often become irksome administrators.

Morons loves to point-out why something can't be done, so when the genius creates, the Moron often serves-up criticism and constraints.

*The Art of Letting It Happen* by Dr. Dill A. Yerom

“There's just no feasible way that you can make any functioning marine structure out of rock and some primitive cement, which remains mostly submerged in the ocean for two to three thousand years, yet remains operational and doesn't require some form of periodic maintenance! It just can't be done, especially right along the shore, where all the wave action will beat it to death. Such an idea is just ridiculous. If you'd studied mechanical and marine engineering, you'd realize this. Now, don't be absurd! The ocean is simply too unforgiving. The laws of

physics and mother nature say, ‘no.’” Your typical modern day marine engineer might so proclaim.

Generally, the various fish which had been trapped inside the primitive wall, by the outgoing tide, would cruise along barely inside the wall. Apparently, their genetically programmed brains were desperately searching for an outflow, a way to escape back to the deeper waters of the Bay of Cadiz, or perchance into the contiguous Atlantic Ocean. My childhood friends and I emulated the ancient Phoenician fishermen. We all carried spears, or “gigs,” as we then called them. We never used nets, since the trap wall and much of the bottom inside the trap was covered in jagged razor sharp oyster shells, which would most certainly snag and easily sliced-up a net. For that same reason, we were careful not to slip and fall on the trap wall. If you fell on the wall you were almost guaranteed a deep cut from the oyster shells and barnacles. If you stumbled and knew you were going to fall, it was best to jump for the nearby water, rather than to make a grab for the razor covered wall.

Our spear heads came in different sizes and configurations, usually sporting one to five barbs. They all had wooden handles from six to eight feet in

length. We'd buy these weapons in neighboring towns of Rota and Puerto de Santa Maria. A one-eyed blacksmith in Rota made some of the larger cruder spears, and the market in Puerto carried the factory machined, multi-pronged gigs.

The Rota blacksmith, was so hairy he almost looked ape-like. He had lost his right eye, when hammering a piece of red hot iron and a piece had broken-loose, and popped-up off the anvil. As a child, I often wondered how much pain ape-like man must have endured. The smithy never bothered to cover the damaged eye, so the ugly deformed scarred orb was a sight to behold, indeed. The cornea was no longer a smooth dome, nor was it clear, but rather it was flat, white and brown and cloudy, with brown streaks extending out onto what was normally the eye's white scleral wall. The blacksmith claimed he could only tell if it was day or night with the bad eye. He wasn't shy about staring, and seemed to enjoy people's responses to his strange looking eye. I'd find my own gaze, jumping back and forth, between the his good eye and his mutilated eye. Often, I wondered if he feared another piece of stray red hot metal taking-out his one remaining eye. The idea of being totally blind was terrifying then, and

still is. Years later, I'd do volunteer work, taking fresh corneas from people in the hospital morgue for transplant. Using a very thin scalpel, I'd cut them free of the eye, gently place them each on a tiny plastic pedestal, then place the pedestal in a small clear plastic vial filled with saline. Lastly, I'd drive the corneas to the airport. Invariably, that volunteer job caused me to think of the hairy Spanish blacksmith.

As male children, we preferred the crude blacksmith-made weapons. They appeared to be stronger, more formidable... like something out of the iron age. They were hammered-out by hand, after being fired molten red in the smithy's forge, and the half blind smith, then filed their points till they were razor sharp. After heating, shaping, and briefly annealing the weapon, the smithy dunked the newly made gig in a shallow pan half-filled with olive oil, supposedly to prevent rusting. The red hot iron caused the oil to violently bubble and spit, and the smithy would always turn his face away, to avoid hot spitting oil droplets. Nevertheless, the weapon could still rust, so every time that I'd finish using it, I'd rinse it off with the garden hose, then wrap it up in a rag soaked in some of Dad's used motor oil. Those

handcrafted weapons were quite possibly exactly like the ones, used by the ancient Phoenicians, thousands of years prior. They probably used olive oil to help preserve their weapons; after all, the olive tree is native to the Mediterranean basin. Wild olives were gathered by neolithic peoples, as far back as 8000 BC.

As mentioned, the entire fish-trap was covered by razor sharp sea crusting, mostly barnacles, and oyster shells, whence to protect our feet, unlike the ancient Phoenicians, who probably worn sandals, we wore old tennis shoes, routinely the ever popular black and white *Chuck Taylor All-Stars*. Back then, we kids assumed those simple canvas and rubber tennis shoes were the absolute ultimate in footwear, and that just by wearing them, we were able to run faster and jump higher.

No part of the original stone wall was visible underneath all the marine crusting, so we didn't actually know if it were made of stone, brick, concrete, or whatever. But my guess is that it was originally made of carefully fitted stones, with some early form of concrete to affix the stones together and facilitate the aforementioned reinforcing marine incrustation. Even the ancient Romans had used

concrete in their buildings, and Roman wasn't too much younger than the older Phoenicia. The longevity of ancient marine concrete might be because of the reaction of the salty seawater with quicklime and volcanic ash, creating a hard crystalline material, known as, tobermorite. This substance resists fracturing and may well be the most durable building material ever created. Today's modern concrete, if exposed to seawater, usually breaks down, within a few decades.

The two civilizations (Roman and Phoenician) existed peacefully for centuries, but occasionally they'd war with each other. There were the Punic Wars between 264 BC to 146 BC, but the term Punic meant Carthaginian, who were of the Phoenician ancestry. Those mean greedy pieces of gray matter will always find something to disagree about, just so the gray goop can begin killing, thereby stimulating certain sadistically pleasurable neurons. Wars will happen, as long as those selfish morbid pieces of neural tissue exist.

Like I said, we kids gigged (speared) many different types of fish, and as mentioned a lot of Moray eels, as well as the tasty cuttlefish. Spearing an eel was always exciting, since the eel fought hard,



and with its many bacterial-laden teeth was fairly dangerous. The more the eel flopped and thrashed about, the more likely it was to sink its teeth into you, so the trick was to step on its head and cut it off as quickly as safely possible, then kick the severed head in the water to attract more fish. The creature was fast, demanding that we be careful, and so none of us were bitten. The Spanish peoples regularly ate Moray eels; the Americans typically didn't. Before cooking the eel, you use a salt rub to de-slim the animal, then you just clean it and and cut it into fillets. I regret never trying to eat the eel, since many of the Spanish folks claimed it was truly delicious, but eating such an ugly thing just seemed unappealing. There are about 200 species of Moray eels, some get up to 13 feet in length, but the ones at the trap were usually no more than six feet. Still, a six foot Moray was a seriously menacing creature. I'd give the Morays to Jose, our gardener, a truly great guy. He was your typical friendly Andalusian, with the jet black hair and black eyes, and dark reddish brown skin, causing the white of his eyes and his brilliant white teeth to stand out, in stark contrast.

Each morning, Jose came to work on a light weight red motorcycle. When my parents weren't

around, he taught me to ride it, at age eleven. He'd let me drive the small 90 cc motorbike all over the base, while he worked long hours in our yard. Amazingly, none of the neighbors told my parents, though I'm certain they'd seen me riding it. For an eleven year old, driving a motorcycle was a tremendously liberating experience. Years later, I'd own four different motorcycles and never needed any lessons or practice, thanks to kindly Jose. Currently, I own a moderately powerful *Triumph Thruxton*, and each time I ride it, I think of Jose's little red motorcycle. The little 90 cc bike was much more thrilling at age eleven. Jose also allowed a couple of my friends to ride. Many of the Andalusian folks had hearts of pure twenty-four carat gold.

He put good will, above his own financial wellbeing. Throughout my life, I've found that in general no one is more generous, than are the poor. Poor people always know exactly how much money they have, in their pocket, and in their bank account; that is, if they even have a bank account. Also, they better know the cost of various food items and exactly what things they require to live. Wealthy people usually don't know those things, yet it is often the poor man, who is most apt to anonymously share

with his friends and strangers.

The freedom that Jose afforded me, by allowing me to ride his motorbike, was astounding... move over, *Easy Rider*. I'd always fill the bike's fuel tank, before returning it to him, and sometimes I'd leave a little money in one of his saddlebags. Gas on the base was only ten cents a gallon, and Jose's bike only held roughly one gallon. A movie on the base was also only one thin dime. So, I'd ride into the main section of the base, park the bike, take in a matinee show, fill the motorcycle's tank at the base gas station, next to the Navy Exchange, and ride home, all for less than twenty cents. Mom and Dad never had a clue about this, yet the base gas station was consistently packed with people. Even though plenty of people saw me riding the motorcycle, apparently no one said a thing about it to my folks. Still, I lived in constant fear of someone telling my Dad, that they'd seen me riding Jose's motorcycle, but miraculously, no one squealed. I'd often imagined that one day, I'd come home and there'd be Dad, belt in hand, waiting to discipline me for riding Jose's motorcycle, but it never happened.

Times have vastly changed and certainly so has the price of gas, even though technology has made

the black crude far easier to locate, pump, transport, and fractionate into the various fuels. So why is gasoline far more expensive? Because we're running out, right? Ha, ha! Remember that the oil companies have played that tired song for too many years. I'm sure it's just a matter of inflation, right? That's why, recently and for several years running, Exxon made the largest corporate profit in the history of the world, but without their stock value increasing a proportionate amount, and while they were getting billions of barrels of free black crude out of Iraq.

That massive profit escalation, increased its market cap many fold, but was only reflected in a doubling of its stock value, and I don't think they even received a single Well's Notice! Wells Notices are something of a paper tiger, anyway. Many are dropped, and besides that, the Wells Notice usually serves to provide the company with enough forewarning, that it can easily be prepared for the ensuing SEC (US Securities and Exchange Commission) investigation. The SEC investigating a major oil company is like the Br'er Rabbit tricking the fox into throwing him in the briar patch.

The lack of the stock's gain in the market makes one wonder where all that money went, or maybe it

doesn't. You'd have to be a moron to believe that the mega corporate would proportionally share its gains with its share holders. Could it be that the oil executives took that massive amount of wealth? Where else could the money have gone? Only *Apple* has a larger market cap than *Exxon Mobile*. With there being so few major oil companies, in essence they have a functional monopoly. And, no one even considers trust busting. Oil companies, drug companies, banks, insurance companies, medical supply companies, food companies, and the military industrial complex have almost all America's money. They have a stranglehold on the entire world's wealth. What do you have?

While spearfishing the Phoenician fish-trap, I once unknowingly speared a large Moray eel in its tail. The eels usually stayed up inside recesses within the inside of the ancient wall. As kids, we'd drop cut pieces of bait fish in the water and watch it slowly drift down the inside of the wall, and as the piece descended and passed the entrance to an eel's cave, the animal's ugly head would dart out, and snatch the bait.

That day, when the eel's head shot-out to get the piece of baitfish, I missed the eel, and it quickly

ducked back into its hole. The spear I used that day had a broken handle and was only three feet in length, but the eel was almost twice that long. Frustrated because I'd missed, I foolishly leaned down into the water and unwisely plunged my arm down, holding onto the broken end of the three foot wooden handle, and jabbed the spearhead down into the eel's little cave. From the feeling in the handle, I could tell that I'd sunk the spear into the eel's flesh. So I foolishly pulled back, yanking the eel out of its cave with the barbed spear. Unfortunately, instead of having gigged the eel in its head, I had stuck the gig in its tail, and with the small amount of turbulence, I'd created, I couldn't see the animal very well, and foolishly assumed I'd stabbed it in its head.

As a result, as soon as I pulled the impaled yellowish-brown monster out of its hole, it immediately began curling up my spear, its large bacterial-packed toothy jaws snapping wildly at my hand, and then my face. The eel was coming for me with a deadly vengeance. Supposedly, the worst part of the Moray's bite is the subsequent infection, which is often difficult to cure, even with antibiotic therapy. Scared out of my mind, hurriedly I jerked my body back, releasing the spear as the animal's

teeth slashed-out, within an inch of my nose.

The spear, with the eel still attached, began traveling in a spasmodic jerking manner out into the lumen of the fish-trap, and so it was time to go see the blacksmith to buy a new gig, since I had no intention of wading out into the water to retrieve it. Lacking much in the way of a conscience, I didn't feel the slightest regret for the wounded, and no doubt tortured, eel. For the rest of the day, I kept thinking about what it would have been like to have whatever was left of my infected nose amputated. I'm sorry to say, that my friends and I were raised, so as not to be too concerned about the welfare of animals.

In those days, very few people cared about animal rights. The further humans get from those smoke filled caves, the more they seem to care about animals. Some folks believe that the first animal protection legislation in Europe was passed (1635) in Ireland. It was called the Thomas Wentworth's Act, to prevent cruelty to working horses being pulled by their tails, and to stop the pulling of wool from live sheep. Even an extremely good man like my Dad had played a key role in the killing of large numbers of whales, mostly sperm whales and killer whales. It's quite likely that my outstanding Dad, single-

handedly killed more whales than any other human to ever walk the earth!

It all started, when the Icelandic government made an appeal to the United States to help them with their supposed failing fishing industry. Their politicians claimed that the whales had been ripping through the many huge fishing nets, thereby laying waste to the nation's fishing industry, and since their economy depended on fishing, the country was on the verge of bankruptcy. Hence, in the spirit of cooperation the US Navy had ordered Dad to take his bomber squadron to Iceland, and literally bomb the whales.

An older Icelandic civilian acted as the whale-spotter, and rode in Dad's lead plane to scout-out the whale pods (groups of whales). In addition, the planes were in radio contact with various fishing boats, which also acted as spotters. Over a few weeks, by strategically spreading out the boats and the planes, over tens of thousands of square miles, the squadron effectively covered nearly the entire North Atlantic, and killed almost all the whales therein. Dad said that the sperm whale pods ran about 25 to 30 animals, and the killer whale pods were roughly 35 to 40 whales.



This sorrowful aberrant endeavor destroyed nearly a thousand whale pods, roughly thirty thousand whales, and all killed to supposedly save the Icelandic fishing industry, and that nation's economy. When a pod of whales was spotted, two bombers would drop down low over the water, to straddle the pod. Simultaneously, both planes would drop a massively powerful depth-charge. The depth-charges were set to detonate just thirty feet under the surface of the water. The tremendous shock waves would literally lift the entire whale pod up and out of the water, killing all its whales from the tremendous pressure. The dead whales' massive bodies remained intact, floating belly-up on the surface. Dad came home with countless numbers of ivory whale teeth, which all later burned in a warehouse fire.

Months later, and well after the squadron had departed Iceland, Dad obtained some back-channel information, indicating that he and his squadron been deceived. In reality, only a few fishing nets had been purposely destroyed. These few boats with torn nets were put on display for the media to photograph, and to better service the lie that the whales had ripped hundreds of the fishing nets. Iceland's news agencies convinced the American

ambassador that the whales were ruining the fishing industry, when in actuality only a few nets had been damaged, and only by humans, not by the whales.

Many of Iceland's politicians were heavily invested in the country's whaling industry. In addition, Dad later discovered that the man, behind getting the US to kill the whales, was the principle owner of Iceland's whaling industry, and was that same nefarious individual, who had ridden as whale spotter in Dad's plane. It was that man's corporation, whose boats later harvested all the dead whales, which the depth-charges had killed. You've got to love politics! That small political and business venture nearly succeeded in killing all the whales in the North Atlantic.

That's just one of countless examples where a large corporation has manipulated an entire country for personal gain, and at devastating cost to mother nature or to its' citizens. Although this may sound slightly contradictory, but even though Dad killed lots of whales, he was extremely kind to animals, especially considering the time in history. He was just following orders, and believed he'd been saving a country's economy from bankruptcy. Dad knew nothing about environmental concerns, and he

trusted in his political and military leaders. He was a highly intelligent and good man, unquestionably doing what he assumed was the right. How often have the world's military men fallen prey to such blind trust?

The tasty cuttlefish from the fish-trap was a delicious type of squid, which I dearly loved to eat. They had wider bodies than most of the more tubular streamlined squid. They also had a cuddle bone inside, which people would put in birdcages for the birds to chew on. The cuttlefish seemed to be slightly more meaty, than the squid. I'd clean the cuttlefish, and remove the hard white cuttle bone, then slice their bodies into rings or strips, and remove the head and parrot-like beak. Then, our saintly maid, Carmen, would lightly fry them in the skillet, using flour and virgin olive oil, and once on the plate, I'd sprinkled them down with plenty of tangy fresh lemon juice. Spanish cooks would frequently use the squid's own black ink to cook them in, but I didn't care for that particular preparation; still, it was a popular Andalusian dish, *calamari con tinta*.

Often after an afternoon bullfight, I'd go to a restaurant for a plate of fried 'calamari,' and I'd wash it down with a small half liter bottle of red wine from

the *Osborne Bodega*. I've never really enjoyed the white wines. The *Osborne Bodega* was just up the road, in the neighboring town of Puerto de Santa Maria, where Anna and Carmen lived, but thankfully not near each other. I loved both women; one the beautiful sinner, the other a homely saint. That bodega is now world famous, but it got its start right there in that tiny town. Back then, a half liter of wine was only ten cents, the meal was roughly twenty-five to fifty cents, depending on the restaurant. Back then in Spain, you could eat like a king for pocket change. Both products (wine and food) have since gone way up. Recently, I visited Barcelona. The people and sites were tremendous, but so were the food prices. Who would ever have guessed that wine would become such a huge connoisseur and collector item? Yes, it was then as well, yet nothing like it is today. I know a few people who actually invest and make decent money, by trading rare wines. But it's a tricky investment, even if you know what you're doing.

<http://www.bodegas-osborne.com/en/puerto-de-santa-maria/visitas/>

Such an investment or hobby would be lost on

me, since I now have little sense of smell. Several years back, I was attacked by a large raving schizophrenic on the streets of Boulder, Colorado, and even though I finally caught him with a right hook and knocked him out, and technically won the fight, my nose had to be reconstructed. During the surgery, there went most of my sense of smell. As a result, except for the alcohol buzz, an expensive Montrachet would not be too different from home-made grade juice. Sometime go online and checkout the 1907 Heidsieck, then think about all the starving children on the planet. While I'm not a socialist *per se*, capitalism in the extreme can be more than a bit selfish.

The mile long beach in the Rota Naval Base held many fascinations. The sand was by no means sugary white, like the beaches near Mobile. It was more of a grayish-white, with large areas of tan and brown. The brown areas were where enormous sections of the huge cliff had crashed down, after a storm, and soil had mixed with the sandy beach. During the high winds, large waves would pound away at the cliffs.

If you dug-down into the beach sand, oddly enough, you'd find that it to be only one to two feet deep. Underneath the sand, you'd run into a solid thick

subsurface of slippery hard gray clay. At least it was that way in the part of the beach, near the fish-trap, where we kids, would routinely search for ancient treasures.

The ancient treasures washed-up from the bottom of the Bay of Cadiz, owing to the fact that scores of Spanish galleons, as well as various ancient Phoenician, Greek, Egyptian, and Roman vessels, had gone down in the bay. Yet even so, no divers were ever seen in the bay. Rumor had it, that the bay was filled with sharks, due to an old Spanish slaughterhouse, which still operated in nearby Cadiz. The slaughterhouse dumped the animals' blood and guts, directly into the bay. The abattoir had been dumping in the bay, since the late 1700s, just like in America, where rivers, bays, and oceans are now used as corporate septic tanks. If Trump gets elected, you can bet that environmental protection will end, and the rivers and bays will suffer. To this day, there are probably many ancient treasures, still to be found on the bottom of the Bay of Cadiz. Because of all the shipwrecks, after a big storm, it was easy to find artifacts. The various relics thrown-up onto the beach, in response to the storm waves, would sift down through the sand, to lay on the hard subsurface

clay bed.

<http://www.archdaily.com/369809/professional-cooking-school-in-ancient-slaughterhouse-sol89>

Pragmatically, that old slaughterhouse had an attached cooking school, where I'd sometimes go to eat for free. The food was prepared by the Spanish culinary students, and always delicious. The school eventually failed, but I've heard that it has started-up, again. My friends and I would use our hands and worn-out big metal kitchen spoons to dig the surface sand away from the gray clay bed. Once down to the clay substrata, we'd gradually scrape along the clay's hard surface, finding such things as: big and small four-sided green copper nails, countless ancient coins (Roman, Greek, and Phoenician), one ancient dagger, lots of broken pottery, and very rarely, a few pieces of very simple jewelry, but these were only crude copper rings and bracelets.

Personally, I only found the nails, fragments of pottery, and about fifty ancient coins. Only one of the coins was silver. The rest I found were only copper. Unfortunately, I found no gold coins, at least

not there. However, on a trip to Italy, I did find an extremely old gold coin on the south bank of the Arno River. The coin's worth is about five hundred dollars, so I keep it in a safety deposit box. The ancient world minted so many types and numbers of copper coins, that most of them have little to no numismatic value. The Romans used over 600 provincial mints in cities scattered around their empire! Those ancient coins had mint marks, much as do the coins minted, today. But like I said, there are so many of those ancient coins, generally they are pretty close to worthless. Once, right after a big storm, four of us kids discovered a large piece of an old Spanish cannon; the kind that pirates used. It was about forty feet offshore on the sandy bottom in about four feet of water, next to the fish-trap.

The cannon was severely broken, with the butt-end of the cannon missing. We only found the distal four feet of the large heavy barrel, and try as we might, it was far too weighty, for us to retrieve from the water, so we were forced to leave it there. When we found it, we were so excited, that you would have thought we had found the lost city of Atlantis. Perchance, that heavy piece of old cannon is still there.



But by far, my most electrifying recollection of the ancient Phoenician fish-trap, occurred one clear afternoon, when four of us had arrived late, in the since that the tide was fast coming-in. Consequently, the part of the horseshoe wall farthest from shore, where we'd generally catch the most fish, was already a few inches underwater. This apex of the wall was being lapped-over by waves. It wouldn't be but a few minutes and larger sections of the wall would follow; so if we were going to catch anything, we needed to hurry. In a rush, we jumped up onto the wall. I went first, then right behind me followed Scotty, then Luke, and last Billy.

The four of us, with our spears in hand, marched quickly toward the apex of the horseshoe wall, which as mentioned, was already submerged about a foot. We were spaced a few feet apart, quickly walking the wall, toward the apex, while our eyes constantly scanned the water inside the trap for fish, which might have been cruising the wall on the landward side, looking for a place to escape the trap, back to the sea. At the apex, which we still hadn't reached, the bottom was about twelve feet down. We slowly continued to walk toward the apex, diligently searching for fish. About two-thirds of the way to the

apex, Billy suddenly yelled.

“Oh, shit! Look!”

We all turned and to see what it was that Billy was yelling about. A huge dark form was approaching from the direction, which we had just come, swimming just on the inside of the wall. The massive dark shadow displayed the tall telltale dorsal fin, jutting a foot out of the water. The realization of the oncoming shark was staggering, especially since our feet were only two or three inches above the water's surface. The creature must have been deep in the center of the trap, when we first climbed onto the wall. Perhaps, the shark had felt the vibrations of our footsteps, and was coming to investigate. A cold sweat, popped-out on my skin. I'd never felt such a fear! Traveling at its leisure speed, the shark was going to reach us in a few seconds. *This is what terror is like! At least the rumor about shitting your pants is wrong.* Never had I seen a large shark, except in the movies.

I'd been told that the sharks tended to stay near Cadiz, and its slaughterhouse, just about one mile across the bay, from where our fish-trap was located. Up until that day, I had only seen a small two footer, cruising along the inside of the trap barrier about

three months earlier, but this big monster was a virtual nightmare, a totally new experience in fear. *If only I could wake-up, and this was only a bad dream!* But there was no waking-up, and believe you me, I was as awake as a kid could be!

At thirteen, Luke was the oldest and most athletic of the four of us, and swift to assume the role of leader. Had we tried to out run the predator, by continuing further out and around the ancient stone marine rampart, we might not have made it, since parts of the apex were already submerged, and all of it was extremely slippery, not to mention razor sharp. Besides, the shark was moving too quickly, and would probably reach the submerged apex, just as we did, even if we ran. Which would likely draw the shark's attention. Normally, if the top of the wall was underwater, it didn't matter. We'd just wade along the wall's crest, even if it were bellybutton deep. But of course, that was when there wasn't a huge shark cruising nearby.

Certainly, none of us cared to walk along the submerged wall top with that massive toothy beast in the same water. Furthermore, had we just jumped off the wall into the water outside the trap-wall, it seemed like it would have been fairly easy for the

shark to get over the wall, and there was a chance the shark could have sensed our vibrations in the water on the opposite side of the wall, and it either could have jumped over the wall, or raced to, and crossed, the submerged section, and gotten to us, before we could reach the shore.

We never imagined that we'd ever see such a deadly creature in our sublime ancient fish-trap. No one on the base had ever mentioned seeing a shark on the beach. With the shark fast closing-in and the tide rising, our trying to out run it, by continuing along the wall was definitely too scary a proposition. Running on the uneven wall would possibly make us more conspicuous to the shark, as would splashing through the submerged apex, which would also have markedly increased the likelihood of our slipping and falling into the trap ourselves. But as mentioned, Luke courageously seized the moment, and spoke-up.

“We’ve got four gigs. Let’s bunch-up close together, guys! As the shark goes by us, don’t move a fucking muscle, then when the head of the shark gets to Joey, Joey will give the signal, and we all gig the bastard at the same time. *I gotta give the signal? I can’t chicken out.* When Joey goes for the shark’s head, we all spear it at the same time. Once we stick him, he’ll

try to get away from us and leave us alone. It'll give us time to get back to shore. Get ready guys. Stab him in the fucking head, Joey! You hear? When his head gets to you, Joey, stab him hard in his God damn head!" Luke repeated.

There was no time to think of something else, so I simply nodded. Then, we bunched together, but not quite touching... *carpe momentum*. That little phase was one of my Dad's favorites, for in combat critical decisions were made in moments, not days.

"I understand. I'll fucking do it, man!" I said, as I found my voice, and we were all raising our gigs. *This is fucking tough, but we're doing it!*

Luke had appointed me as the signal man. The shark would reach me last. I'm sad to say, I took comfort in the fact that if the shark could see us up on the wall, it would probably bite one of my three friends, before it got to me. On the other hand, the shark's teeth would be closest to me, when we all stabbed downward. Bare-in-mind, our ages ranged from ten to thirteen. Billy was the youngest at ten and Luke was oldest at thirteen. Our feet were only a couple of inches above the surface of the water. If the twelve foot monster were to even slightly raise his head and sling his jaws to the left, we were bloody shark food.

*Alea iacta est.* {The dice have been cast.}

-Caesar

Terror had firmly grabbed me by the short hairs. *What if Luke is wrong and stabbing him makes him attack, instead of go away?* But as mentioned, there was no time for second thoughts or discussion, no time to formulate another scheme. Less than five-seconds remained, before the shark would reach Luke, and a viable strategy had been proposed. We therefore had no time to debate the strategy, no alternative, but to follow Luke's orders, and prepare to attack the shark. Thinking about it later, we could have let it simply swim on by. But if I didn't stab and the others did, the shark was even more likely to bite me, so we were fully committed to Luke's plan.

The fear was monstrous, so it wasn't like I stuffed down the fear, but more like I briefly avoided it, momentarily put it off, or side-stepped it. Right before the shark arrived, I thought of the lone little boy in the bullring, with only his red raggedy piece of cloth, and the little wooden stick. I was eleven and I think we were about the same age, but I wasn't

nearly as brave. Moreover, I'd chickened out about warning the teens in the little yellow car, and so it was time to swallow my fear. We were seriously depending on each other, bonded by fear.

The four of us stood there bunched together, poised to strike, and scared witless, bunched together for two reasons: to make sure that all the spears fit into the back of the shark, and the fear made us want to be nearer for support. We stood with our gigs raised. Billy's ten year old knees were literally shaking, as I readied myself to spear the demon. Should the shark have slashed out toward me, I'd planned on leaping backwards off the wall, and into the bay, away from its teeth. *Wonder if it's going to be hard to drive the spear through its hide?* I'd heard that shark's had extremely tough skin. Luke then issued his final instruction.

“Joey, you'll give the signal. When Joey says, ‘Now,’ we all stab. Stab it in its God damned head, Joey! Here it comes! Kill the fucking bastard, guys!” Luke ordered. *Luke's braver than shit!*

Luke's steely thirteen year old courage was nothing short of amazing. It was like he had prepared his entire life for just that moment. He showed not one drop of fear! That on-coming death-dealing monster

was the worst fear I'd ever known, far beyond that which I'd experienced at the pigeon shoot the day, when Mr. White had bet on me, or the fear I'd had right before hammering Fritz in the head on Mrs. Smith's front porch. This horror felt like a live creature had climbed inside my skull and was chomping-away at my soul, and I had to simply overlook it, so I could give the signal and stab it. It was like putting your hand in the fire, and forcing yourself to leave it there.

The enormous silent black shape appeared over two and one half feet wide. The sheer width of the beast terrified me, but I stayed focused on the creature's menacing head, my target. That was the only thing I allowed myself to think about. About ten feet before the shark reached us, the fear became nearly unbearable, and that's when the swimming movements of the creature seemed to slow down, and his image under the surface dramatically sharpened in detail. The features of the beast were easily seen in the smooth clear water, since there were no significant waves inside that part of the trap. Time slowed, and that probably meant my brain had speeded up, no doubt being fueled by drops of pure precious adrenaline... *how absolutely alive, I felt.*



Almost like life without adrenaline wasn't really being alive. *Has the shark slowed down because he's preparing to leap out of the water?* Another second passed, and I could see the shark's soulless left onyx eye, and that the tip of his left pectoral fin was almost touching the inside of the trap wall. Then, I saw the edge of his partially open mouth, and the foreboding white razor sharp teeth! *Oh, shit!* He looked to be about twelve feet in length, but seemed unusually thick, relative to his length. While I continued to dodge my cowardly fear; my meager courage was ebbing fast, so I was hard pressed not to freakout. *I'm terrified! Just ignore the fear for a couple more seconds.* In the final moment, in which the shark neared, it was like I'd stepped-out of a life-long fog, and unexpectedly, I suddenly felt an all encompassing desire to kill the scary animal, not too different from how I'd felt, right before planting the hammer in Fritz's head. *I'm going to drive this steel gig clean through his fucking head!* After all, it was all or nothing! *If I'm going to die, I might as well die right!* I reminded myself to aim slightly low, because of the water's refraction... a simple small recollection, which I always made before spearing a fish. It helped to steady me.

And then, the shark's massive head was directly in front of my feet, and so with every ounce of my horrified little kid strength, I yelled, "Now," as I was simultaneously thrusting down my single barbed blacksmith-made lance, with every drop of strength I could muster. As the large crudely made barb descended, I was looking directly at the creature's vacant unfeeling black button eye, which obviously hadn't as yet seen me, until just as the spear point was striking home, about one inch behind that cold dead eye. The beast failed to sense my presence, until the primitive single barbed iron spear was driving-in hard and deep.

With the spearing, the shark violently rolled and turned sharply to his right, having discerned the threat, too late. For me, the stabbing into its flesh had felt much too easy, as if the shark was made out of soft foam rubber. This too was probably a misperception, owing to adrenaline. The barbed lance had in fact pierced the hide deftly, and judging from the handle being torn from my hands, it had penetrated deeply. Straightaway, the wooden handles were ripped from all our grasps, allowing us to briefly sense the power of the beast. The great fish forcefully thrashed, flinging itself away from the

wall, out toward the center of the fish-trap, and thankfully away from us. *Luke was right!* The big shark's movement drenched us with a wave of cold seawater, since it was the dead of winter.

Obviously, Luke's plan had worked. Being slightly too slow in releasing my grip of the gig's handle, I nearly fell in with the shark, but instead, just went up on my toes, windmilling my arms for a second. Billy did fall, but fortunately, he fell outside the wall and hurriedly climbed back up. Luke had slipped and sat down hard on the wall. Scotty was fine. We all were in shock, but fortunately uninjured. Still now, I can relive the terror of that day; just thinking about it, my old heart accelerates, as it did then, over fifty-four years ago. More than half a century has passed and the memory of that shark remains fresh. All four of our gigs had struck home, and the handles were sticking up along the left side of shark's powerful dark gray back and side. The dorsal fin, the top of his tail, and the gigs were waving, tilting back and forth, across the surface of the water. The shark swam fitfully, most likely in horrible mind-numbing pain, but I felt no empathy for the poor creature.

Three years prior in 1956, before going to Spain, I'd seen the movie, *Moby Dick*, starring Gregory Peck,

as the legendary Captain Ahab. The shark wandering around the fish-trap, with our gigs protruding out of his back, reminded me of the scene of the great white whale, breaking the ocean's surface, with all the harpoons, projecting from its back.

The four of us kids had performed extraordinarily well! *Nobody chickened-out!* We were all thrilled! For a few seconds, we just silently watched the four wooden handles hypnotically swaying back and forth, as Billy climbed back-up on the wall, and the monster thrashed around in the center of the fish-trap. Unharmmed and unarmed, we hurriedly ran along the wall, back to the safety of the beach. We stood on the protection of the sand and continued to watch the big fish and our tilting gigs, until the tide came in. *I'm sure glad sharks can't walk on land!* About forty-five minutes later, the shark was still alive, though noticeably slower, and more fatigued in his movements. Finally, he departed over the submerged seawall, disappearing with our gigs into the deeper waters of the bay, where he probably soon died. *I'll go see the blacksmith, tomorrow.* The four of us were all high on adrenaline, laughing and talking loudly. We agreed that we were all going to visit the blacksmith, to purchase the larger, more

lethal, crudely made gigs, just incase another shark were to appear in the fish-trap. We even talked about affixing ropes to the gig handles, as if they were harpoons. Of course, no shark ever showed-up in the trap, again.

Walking home, we swore each other to secrecy, for if our parents had learned of the shark, that would have spelled the end to our going to the beach and the fish-trap. It seemed like my secrets, were fast piling-up. Dad had repeatedly lectured me, about the importance of keeping secrets, only most of my secrets I was keeping from him and Mom.

Furthermore, I kept the secret about the shark from Anna, for fear she might have told Mr. White, and he then might have relayed it to my Dad. I've kept the shark a secret, until now. Secrets have their own remarkable power. You hold them in reserve, and they provide you with something like a small energy source, a neuron-battery, if you will.

In those terrifying seconds with the shark, the four of us had developed an unbreakable bond. Never before, had I felt such a bond. Call it what you will, trial by fire, or shared adrenaline. After that day, we all looked out for each other, and considered the fish-trap to be our own personal territory. We'd earned it,

and so we staked our claim to the beach and fish-trap. We felt that we personally owned the ancient structure, not the US Navy, not Spain... we four kids owned it! The shark was an event I wished I could have shared with my parents, but knew better, if I wanted to continue to fish the ancient trap. That night during dinner, my Mom mentioned, that she gotten a letter from her mother, which stated that the last valiant Confederate soldier had just passed away, Walter Williams. *Who cares? The last loser died.* After all, I was taught that all the Confederates were traitors to the United States. Grandma never truly accepted the South's losing the Civil War. In her mind, all the southern soldiers were valiant and all the northern soldiers, were just dirty yankees.

Our time at the fish-trap was idyllic, spearing fish and looking for buried treasure, under the beach sand. It was a child's dream. Best of all, we had no supervision. No one told us what to do. On the beach, or off the base, I was like a full-fledged adult, as evidenced by the fact that I had Anna as a sexual companion (a couple months after the shark episode), bullfights to attend, my newspaper route to throw, and my coin and firework business to carry-out, as well as a motorcycle to occasionally ride.

Back then, I had adventure, a woman, buried treasure, my own income, a shotgun to shoot, and cool transportation. My life felt complete.

We kids all had Dads, who were combat vets and perpetually at work, and Moms, who had houses to look after, with their maids and gardeners to command, shopping to do in the near-by Spanish towns, luncheons at the O (Officer's) club, and weekly parties to give and attend. As a result, we kids had lots of time to ourselves.

On the beach, we were our own men, free from the world's control. How I miss those carefree days! My weekends were divided-up between Anna, the bullfights, pigeon shoots, the beach, the fish-traps, playing sports, riding Jose's motorcycle, buying and selling coins and fireworks, shooting at the base range, and a few other things. The following website contains a few early photos of the Navy base and Rota, but I was there years before said photos. Still the photos do look familiar. If you look through them, there's a photos of one of the Guardia de Seville, and another photo of a couple of submarines, next to the base's submarine pier, which is mentioned a bit further along in this book, and was built while I was there.

[https://  
picasaweb.google.com/112885197311570083630/  
RotaSpain19661969](https://picasaweb.google.com/112885197311570083630/RotaSpain19661969)

A portion of that independence and childhood freedom was soon to temporarily change, because of that smaller concrete submarine pier on the base. Some of the subs, which docked there, were nuclear. The main reason for the change was the Spanish government's response to that pier. They claimed that it made them to station a guard nearby, and it was that guard, who'd radically change things for us kids. There were actually four guards, who rotated duty at that guard station, but one surly guard attempted to destroy our right to the beach and fish-trap. He became our bitter enemy, who later would also become our caring friend.

This was about five years, after the *USS Nautilus* had been launched. It was the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine and the first sub to perform a submerged transit of the North Pole, August 3, 1958. Everyone in the US Navy was enthusiastic about the atomic-powered submarine. Atomic energy was looked at as something akin to



black magic. Up until then, people thought the atom held its power in the electrons, but that was nothing compared to energy in the nucleus, as demonstrated by Robert Oppenheimer.

The peoples of this world must unite or they will perish.

J. Robert Oppenheimer

When we deny the evil within ourselves, we dehumanize ourselves, and we deprive ourselves not only of our own destiny but of any possibility of dealing with the evil of others.

J. Robert Oppenheimer

Robert was no doubt thinking about atomic warfare, and probably never remotely guessed that the real threat would be global warming. By the time, I was fishing the ancient traps, the US had several atomic subs, and Russia had but two. Russia didn't launch one, until 1958, and was far behind the United States. Dad talked about the subs, as if he honestly wanted to become a submariner. He worshipped at the feet of military might... whatever it took to protect the homeland. Like I've mentioned, Dad was a Pearl Harbor survivor, decorated combat pilot, and

an intel man for Douglas McArthur; things which you can't easily forget. Of course, with the close of the Vietnam War, Dad did mention that our killing three million Vietnamese, at the expense of 54,000 dead GIs, was only so the huge military industries could get rich. There were no dominoes. That was simply propaganda as an excuse for war.

There's nothing quite like industrializing the destruction of some many people, for the big bucks.

*Bubbles in the Glass* by Mr. Yeo Williams

The cold war and the arms race was gearing up and certain military-related businesses in both countries (Russia and the United States) were making money hand over iron fist. These were the companies, e.g., *Sevmash*, who'd gotten their start, making military arms and equipment in WWII and the Korean conflict. With the end of those wars, their businesses were going into the toilet, so short of another war, the next best thing to insure their fiscal survival was a huge, extremely expensive, very long, cold war. The Russian cold war threat had all of us kids practicing 'duck-and-cover' in our classrooms, at least

once a week. Today, the United States economy primarily exists to serve the military industrial complex, the banks, big Pharma, energy corps, big oil, and the insurance industry. Those industries control roughly ninety-nine percent of America's wealth.

Even though the Russians were initially trailing on nuclear powered submarines, they were first to field a ballistic missile submarine, a Zulu class (non-nuclear) submarine with a single ballistic missile launch tube, which launched successfully on September 16th, 1955. Tons of cash was being poured into the military industrial complexes, both America's and Russia's. *General Dynamics Electric Boat* is still a subsidiary of *General Dynamics*. It's been building subs for the Navy for over 100 years. One company in Russia has probably done more to destroy the Russian economy, than anything else... *Sevmash*. It is impossible to calculate the amount of money that's gone into the nuclear submarines and ships, which have never been employed, for their intended purpose, namely mutually assured destruction. On the other hand, maybe they insured mutual survival, since only a fool would launch WWII; on the other hand, the world is full of rich

fools, just consider global warming.

Every new technological creation is considered by most folks to be astounding; but just a few years down the road, it becomes old hat. Everyone goes crazy over the latest cellphone, laptop, notebook, TV, electric car, etc., until the next one comes out. In the military world, it's the latest: submarine, aircraft carrier, bomber, fighter plane, ICBM, cruise missile, ABM, bomb, sniper rifle, drone, tank, radio, radar, high speed weapon, rail gun, cruiser, torpedo, etc. I'm hoping for the first time-machine, so we can reverse a few fast approaching environmental catastrophes. Since we've been recording annual temperatures, every year since 1999, has been a record hot year for the planet, all except for one year. Remember how Superman could reverse time by zooming around the earth at supra-light speed? Later in this hodgepodge, there's a truly audacious suggestion/idea, which might lay the ground work for building an actual time machine (Book eight, the chapter entitled, *The Mush, The Universe, and the Time Machine.*)

The early 60s undersea nukes were evolving, and with the further development of long range missiles, and nuclear weapons, said subs would soon become

the most formidable weapons ever devised, shades of *Hunt for Red October*. Of course, I hear tell that we have long had nuclear weapons on dispensing platforms, orbiting the earth. Of course, that's hardly a secret, anymore. And of course, what stops one country from simply burying nuclear bombs in other countries, and detonating them using complex long wave radio signals.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/  
Fractional\\_Orbital\\_Bombardment\\_System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fractional_Orbital_Bombardment_System)

All those secret space shuttle launches weren't only to investigate the mysteries of the cosmos, or for a few guys to experience weightlessness, or to send pretty pictures back to earth. In addition, Reagan's Star Wars really happened. Outer space particle beam weapons and laser weapons, as well as orbiting platforms, filled with nukes onboard, are forever surrounding the earth. Who cares if North Korea ever develops an ICBM to carry a nuclear weapon? Reagan's Star Wars weapons can blow them up, soon after liftoff. Besides, why bother developing an ICBM, when a North Korean can just put the bomb on a sailboat, and sail it to Indonesia or the Philippines.

Then, kill some poor visiting American, take his sailboat, put the nuke on it, and sail it into LA or New York harbor. Leave the boat at the dock, steal a car, bury the nuke wherever it's most effective, and detonate the nuke by a complex radio signal or cellphone, when need be.

The biggest current nuclear danger in that the United States arsenal may be the small nuclear bombs, with a blast radius of only 0.29 miles. These atomic bombs are extremely accurate, when fitted with giant fin packages on their tail, so they can be effectively guided by telemetry. The real danger with such tiny, highly accurate, nukes is that they are much more apt to be used, and once you start down the road using nukes, stopping the escalation to larger nukes is next to impossible. These small nuclear weapons are being considered, at a time, when we are about to re-enter the cold war with Russia, or when we are entering into serious conflict with North Korea, or China. North Korea with nukes isn't too scary, but with China and Russia as their allies, they would then become crazy dangerous. Such a nuclear scenario, all but guarantees nuclear winter. On the bright side, nuclear winter might stop global warming. Maybe that's what someone has in

mind... probably Donald.

The good thing about these tiny nukes (B61 gravity nuclear bomb, refitted with tail assembly) is that they will allow the Military Industrial complex to make lots of money... your money, for the tail assembly. These are actually older weapons, first designed around 1963. There are about two hundred of them, which just need to be refitted with the aforementioned guidance tail assembly. After Chernobyl, Three Mile, and Fukushima, and hundreds of nuclear test detonations, that's all we need to enhance the earth's environment... more radiation in the atmosphere, ground, and water. To refit these old bombs, the MIC only wants around \$11 billion... your money. The hell with medical research and education... let's just refit those little old bombs. That's so important... right?

Some of the laser and particle beam weapons Reagan sponsored are powered by giant sapphire crystals. Crystal power is a pretty simple concept. Crystals store lots of energy. To maintain such a solid crystalline structure there has to be high energy electrons, holding those atoms in a ridged geometrical arrangement. If you don't believe me, just throw your basic quartz rock at a railroad track

at night and watch the spark. The spark is the release of photons (light), stored in the high energy electrons of the crystal. The engineers install small explosive charges on giant sapphire crystals. Said crystals are a few feet across, and with the detonation of the small charge can liberate enough energy to power the laser and particle beam weapons, in outer space. These formable weapons were designed to shoot down ICBMs and enemy satellites. Something tells me that they're definitely out there. Remember that long range Korean test missiles, which have mysteriously blown-up? Well, my bet is that we're going to let a few of those succeed, so the MIC can get its ever lucrative cold war. Besides, my bet is that China will either give North Korea the missile technology or the missiles themselves, and they probably also helped them with their nuclear program.

Because of the orbiting platforms with multiple nuclear warheads, I always wondered why there is such a huge issue about the delivery systems (subs, planes, ships, missiles, etc.) for nukes. Of course all that sophisticated hardware diverts money from our federal coffers to the ever hungry military industrial complex. Instead of all these highly expensive delivery systems, why don't the antagonist countries



simply use spies to bury the nukes in their adversary's backyard, right in their cities, or adjacent to critical military installations? A 40 or 50 megaton device buried outside the fence of any military base, if detonated, will erase the base from the earth. Certainly there are many good places to hide such devices. It couldn't be that difficult to do. Don't we have agents in Russia, and doesn't Russia have them in the United States? Almost any country, which has nukes, could hide them in another country. How many ship containers and sailboats come into America, every day that never go through customs or inspection? How many US Navy bases have their own yacht clubs? We could put one in a stealth aircraft and parachute drop it at night, with a small short range telemetry device attached, where our agents wait below with the receiver and a truck, to take it to be buried in some strategic location, which has already been prepared. How hard could it be, when the cartels successfully smuggle in tons of drugs every year?

For that matter, the nuclear device could be brought in piecemeal. If done correctly, it would be practically impossible to find it, or if it was found, to determine, who made it. One could simply use stolen

fissionable material, to avoid the telltale nuclear fingerprint. Each buried nuke could have a detonator hooked up to a radio receiver, with a back-up receiver, and back-up batteries, which responds only to a highly complex series of signals, to prevent the possibility of accidental detonation.

If the balloon goes up, no need for all those underground silos, all those operational personnel, all that training, all those nuclear submarines and their intercontinental missiles, cruise missiles, supersonic long-range bombers, those outer space weapons platforms, and all the counter measure equipment, star wars, antiballistic missiles, attack subs, aircraft carriers, aircraft interceptors, as well as many other types of extremely expensive equipment. After all, the cost of all those systems is beyond staggering... practically immeasurable. Why all that cost, when all you need to do is to send a cheap, but highly reliable radio signal, to the buried nuke, and then *BOOM*? The signal could employ wavelengths that can penetrate dirt, concrete, and oceans. Frequencies could be used that couldn't be jammed. Even so, we just keep making all that costly unnecessary stuff, so the MIC (Military Industrial Complex) can get ultra wealthy from your tax

money. Moreover, a complex radio signal is exceptionally fast; faster than any missile, jet fighter, or even the X-43 (First launched on June 2nd 2003, it cruised along at 7300 mph. Those things are simply a huge waste of money!

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA\\_X-43](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NASA_X-43)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiBsD-cafH8>

But then again, all those folks, who are employed by the military industrial complex, have to work somewhere, and often unemployment is bad enough without them losing their jobs. To get the MIC rolling in dough, all we need is another cold war, or lots of smaller hot wars, or thousands of covert drone strikes, with a bunch of special ops missions thrown-in. Even after a war, there is money to be made by American corporations; just look at *Balliburton*. Just try to find the actual annual profits for Balliburton for the last twenty years!

Over \$100,000,000,000.00 has been spent on supposedly just rebuilding Afghanistan, which by the way, is the longest war in American history, and yet

amazingly no one complains! We are such sheep! We've even built power plants for the Afghans, and the Taliban collects the power bills, not the citizen Afghans, nor the Americans. How is that for weird? War makes money in so many ways, but only for the best of people! Right? One problem is that the Afghans don't understand how to operate and maintain those power stations. Still, some US corporations have made a piss-pot of money just building them... the best of people. The money, collected by the Taliban, from those power plants, when they function, goes across the border to Pakistan. But that doesn't matter because the American companies, which installed them, made a lot of money... your income-tax money, but so what, right?. And, there's the minor fact that we don't want the Taliban telling the world that we stole their opium trade, or that we took-over ten Afghan gold mines. Do you the taxpayer benefit from that opium or gold? America is now awash in addicts. *Purdue-do pharma* made enough oxycontin to create millions of addicts, but when the government finally began to crackdown on the ridiculous doctor-run pill-mills, and the dependent abusers had their pills removed, the addicts were forced to turn to using street heroin, and that's were our taking over the Taliban's trade

really helped-out. That's when China got in on the trade by selling fentanyl; of course, that overly potent drug created countless deaths from overdose. China's role in this fiasco only makes sense, after we turned the opium trade over to them to pay-off our national debt to them, almost a trillion bucks, then. Why else would China start buying those treasury bonds, again?

Using your tax money, the US government has bought the Afghans helicopters for their military, but they have little knowledge of avionics and helicopter maintenance, with no viable way to get replacement parts, and folks, don't even ask about the quality/training of their pilots. Just try to find one Afghan pilot, who can fly at night. Could it be that none of them are instrument qualified? Oddly enough, most of those helicopters, which were purchased, through certain American business interests, are Russian aircraft! Certainly there's no problem about getting replacement parts from Russia! Often, I've wondered if many of these business interests aren't owned by various US intelligence agencies. But once again, some corporation, even if the corporation is owned by US intel, got rich off of that fiasco, and don't think for a second that there aren't certain politicians,

pulling the strings, and receiving hefty bribes/kickbacks, for doing so. And these few examples of American corruption, couldn't possibly account for the \$100,000,000,000.00, which has disappeared into Afghanistan, under the cloak of helping them to 'rebuild.' Just think what America could have done for education and healthcare with that \$100 billion. Many folks wonder about the infrastructure the US has put into Afghanistan, only to not provide for its maintenance, assuring that there is no real longterm benefit to the country, while guaranteeing that US/NSA corps rake in the dough.

<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/money-pit-monstrous-failure-us-aid-afghanistan>

As the American military would pull-out, from various areas, they'd leave behind tremendous amounts of worn-out gear: trucks, cars, humvees, jeeps, generators, aircraft huffers (used to start the aircraft), aircraft parts, refrigerators, pumps, and other extraneous worn-out machines and machine parts. The Taliban got the scrap metal trade, then smelt it and build weapons out of it. It's almost as if we were trying to promote a situation, where the

Taliban, our supposed enemy, remains viable, so the American people will want our military to keep fighting, keep paying the big bucks to the MIC, with your tax money. Perhaps, that's why we continually nail them with countless drone strikes, which do in fact kill the occasional terrorist, but largely kill innocent people, thereby providing the United States with even more enemies, and more business for the MIC. We've got to keep the MIC neck deep in bloody business, since slaughter is their only stock and trade.

Oddly enough, the vast majority of America's scrap metal is purchased by China. The Chinese government does weird things with their people's money, too. They use of that recycled scrap metal construct massive building complexes, and housing projects, even entire cities, which never quite get completely finished (about eighty percent completed), and so no one actually lives there! These cities are simply empty, as if there's been some type of apocalypse and everyone perished. Just go online and checkout these 'ghost cities,' such as: the Kangbashi District of Ordos, the Yujiapu Financial District in the Binhai New Area near Tainjin, the Meixi Lake City near Changsha, etc.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiTDU8MZRYw)

[v=TiTDU8MZRYw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiTDU8MZRYw)

Certain government-friendly Chinese corporations make massive amount of cash, for all the pointless construction, from which certain Chinese leaders receive hefty kickbacks. Moreover, such construction is heavily taxed. Where the United States has various state taxes, in China, they all go to the national government, and believe you me, China has a lot of taxes. But taxes alone don't begin to satisfy the greed of their strange government. And we all know, that no sane Chinese dares to complain. It's easy to appreciate this, when you consider the massive wealth of the country, and the standard of living for the average Chinese... huge amounts of national wealth and lots of poor people... do the math. If the country is wealthy, yet the people are poor, the money is in the hands of some few, much as is the case in the United States.

Seriously folks, maybe we need to retool that massive US military industrial complex to manufacture technology designed to fight the war on global warming. They could build solar panels, alternative energy sources, highly efficient and low



polluting engines for all vehicles: cars, trucks, trains, boats, ships, planes, buses, and things to restore a more normal atmosphere. The MIC could design equipment to help bring down atmospheric carbon. They could invent and manufacture highly efficient computers to be used to educate America's youth. The MIC could also manufacture better pharmaceuticals and superior hospital equipment to bring down the costs of, while elevating the quality of medicine. Fighting global warming is a war worth fighting, but only if you want a viable planet. Maybe the first year of retooling, the MIC could still devote ninety percent of their resources to weapons production (almost all of which don't get used), and ten percent to these suggested technologies. Then, every year thereafter, the MIC manufactures ten percent less weapons, and ten percent more of the above suggested technologies, until we become a more reasonable country... less killing, and more healing.

Perchance the Spanish Navy was just flexing, or it was trying to make a political statement, when they decided to station that one lone Spanish Marine guard on top of the cliff, above our beloved fish-trap. After all, the Spanish didn't have any subs stationed

there, not even a rowboat. Technically, the base was American, but the Spanish had their macho ways, and maintained a tiny military presence, claiming they were only trying to be helpful. Dad had always said that United States had paid twice too much money for the privilege of using 'that worthless piece of real-estate.'

Back then, someone told me, that the Spanish Navy only had one submarine, which was generally in dry-dock, because it had nearly sunk several times... too many leaks. Each time, the sub would try to dive, leaks would appear, so it would be forced to surface. Keeping its pumps running at full tilt, the sub would head back to dry-dock. As mentioned, the cost of the Spanish civil war had broken Spain's fiscal back, leaving not only the masses poor, but the military, as well. The vast majority of Spain's available cash had gone to foreign arms manufactures, many of which were German, but a few were French, American, Russian, and Italian. Most of the Spanish people lived little better than beggars, while the war industrialists lived like kings.

War will always be king, with misery and death its loyal subjects.

*Money Justifies the Means*, by Willam Y.

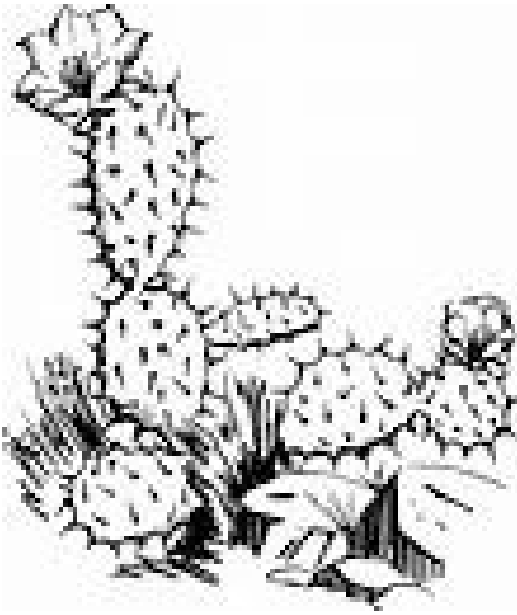
Amore

The polite political reason, that the local Spanish government had placed the one lone guard atop the cliff, overlooking our personnel fish-trap, was supposedly to assist with ‘submarine security;’ all in the spirit of Spanish-US cooperation. But whatever the actual reason, the local Spanish government had foolishly selected, as one of the four guards, an angry young alcoholic, who was a clearcut cultural bigot. That guard was the one most often on duty, and the worse possible person, they could have chosen for international cooperation.

For Dad, diplomacy was always a major issue, and so he was constantly talking about it at the dinner table. The reason he talked so much about diplomacy was that I hated it. Dad was a warrior, a man of action, and not made for the pretenses of politics. He was made for flying and killing, and not remotely configured for the world of diplomacy. Those tedious diplomatic accouterments pained him greatly. He had the tough hide needed for the terrors of combat, but was too thinned skinned, for the capricious indirect machinations of overly sensitive, if not, wholly frivolous politics.

Barring Fritz the cat and maybe the shark, the hateful guard atop the cliff was my first major antagonist. He was my first true human enemy. Yet astonishingly, that guard later became my best friend, and many have saved my life. It's a rare thing indeed, when your hate-filled enemy later becomes your steadfast friend, if not your savior. This requires that both parties use the finer angles of their mind to overcome differences, and their instinctual abilities to hate. They must strive for empathy, instead of constantly gearing-up for mutual annihilation. No doubt the early origins of the ability to hate and feel anger had to do with the need for self preservation. Too often now, it has too little to do with survival, and more to do with greed and power.

OB



## THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

One afternoon, while my three childhood friends and I were walking along the fish-trap wall, we heard men speaking Spanish, as well as the loud sounds of hammering and sawing, coming from atop the adjacent cliff. The ninety foot cliff ran for about a mile along the inward curving bay's beach, and was roughly seventy yards back from the water's edge, at

low-tide. As mentioned, looking at the photos on *Google Earth*, it's easy to see that the once beautiful cliffs are now much shorter, since apparently the water levels have risen considerably, eating farther back into the land, and so little is left of the once wondrous beach. In fact, that beach is essentially gone, and what little is left is now littered with giant, ten foot tall, forty ton concrete tetrapods, placed there so as to slow down further erosion, so that the houses above what's left of the cliff are not lost to the bay. How is it that the Atlantic has risen so much in only fifty-four years, a mere fly speck of earth's time? My bet it's the melted ice, due to: the plethora of belching coal-fired power plants, inefficient gas-powered cars and trucks, too many cow farts, as well as the primordial poisonous methane ice melting off the north-eastern coast of Siberia, because of a warmer Arctic Ocean.

Perchance, one day in the near future, some alien will be cruising by in his flying saucer and say, "Ah, earth! It was such a special and beautiful place, at least while it lasted. I guess the stupid Earthonians were just too greedy to be able to think clearly. All their deaths were simply owing to a few greedy billionaires, and this one fat drug addict radio

talkshow guy that managed to persuade the more ignorant portion of the populace to allow those billionaires to ruin the planet. The general populace was too much like sheep, and just didn't have it in them, to take matters into their own hands, and the police were under the control of the rich polluters and their politicians... a real tragedy."

On the southern end of the beach, where my family's home was once situated atop the lofty cliff, the ninety foot drop was indeed straight down to the beach. Our house was about one hundred feet from the cliff edge. However, on the northern end, where the fish-trap and submarine pier were situated, the drop off was more like an extremely steep slope, about twenty or thirty degrees shy of vertical. At least, that's what it was like for the years we lived there. The cliff face would often be remodeled after each big storm, with large sections cascading down to the sand.

The colossal chunks of cliff would break loose, and thunder onto the beach, ergo sitting in the house during a storm, I could feel the ominous vibrations coming right up through the concrete foundation. The dishes would rattle in the kitchen cabinets and my mother would look concerned, and become

overly talkative. It now appears as if the house I had lived in is completely gone, due to the aforementioned erosion. In the *Google Earth* photos, I can see that the home's foundation yet remains, but the house had been removed, because it's dangerously close to the edge of the cliff. The *Google Earth* photos may be a few years old, and so even the foundation, of my once happy home, may now be in the Bay of Cadiz.

The day that we kids were walking atop the fish-trap wall, and heard the hammering and sawing, coming from somewhere on top the steep (non-vertical) ninety foot incline, we abandoned the trap, then made our way around one end of the cliff, where we climbed-up a much less steep slope, to see who was making the racket. Once on top, we saw that the construction sounds were being produced by a half dozen Spanish Marines hard at work, building the classic wooden guard shack. It was being erected close to the edge of the extremely steep ninety foot slope. Completed, the guard hut overlooked our beach, the fish-trap, as well as the Navy's new submarine pier to its west. The hut's location was strategically placed, indeed.

At first, we didn't really think too much about



the hut. In a few days, it was finished, and came complete with the aforementioned prickly Spanish guard, armed with an old bolt action *1916 German 7 mm Mauser*. The finish on the stock and the bluing on the barrel were both long gone, much as were the guns of the old farmers at the pigeon shoot. Because of the aforementioned Spanish civil war, the signs of poverty were everywhere in Spain, even in their military. The rifle, though aged, was a formidable high-powered long-range weapon, and probably safe to shoot, as long as the barrel wasn't pitted, or the action too loose. The robust 7 mm caliber has often been used in thousand yard shooting competitions, and packs a real punch.

The next day after the grumpy guard arrived, we were down on the beach looking to spear some fish. He came walking across the sand decked-out in his uniform, and armed with the aforementioned rifle. We all smiled and started to walk forward, to greet him, but immediately he shocked us by rudely screaming an order for us to immediately vacate the beach. We knew the beach and fish-trap were ours, and that the Spanish military had no genuine authority over us, so we just politely ignored the ill-mannered man. The base, including the beaches and

piers was leased by the United States. The Spanish Marine had no authority over American personnel on that base, nor any right to order us off the beach. Since we didn't move to vacate our position on the beach, the Spanish guard became furious. He must have played a lot of soccer, since he ran-up to Luke, and deftly used a sideways sweeping motion of his foot to swiftly kick both of Luke's legs right out from under him.

Luke was suddenly up-ended, and came crashing down hard, banging the side of his face and head on hard-packed sand. The impact stunned Luke, and for a few seconds the thirteen year-old seemed dazed, just laying there blinking. Luke was much smaller than the six foot adult Spanish guard. The man stood over Luke laughing, and once again loudly shouted his order, for us to get off the beach. The four of us instantly hated him, but the guy was too big to deal with, and we didn't stand a chance, short of attacking him with our gigs, and we did think about doing just that. *Maybe I could beg him to allow us to use the fish-trap, then once he's distracted, stick him in the neck, and grab his rifle. Dad would never forgive me.* Just a few weeks later, we would nearly kill the guard, and we did so intentionally.

Still right then, there was nothing Luke or any of us could do, except feel humiliated, walk away, to grumble and grouse. We weren't prepared and lacked a workable plan. Our leader, who had saved us from the shark, had been defeated by the loathsome Spanish guard! Again, the guard bellowed for us to get off the beach, or he'd do us severe bodily harm. As we turned to leave, the guard next let loose with a stream of profanity about Americans, also informing us that we were the sons of prostitutes (a common Spanish insult), so I instantly wondered if perchance his mother had actually been a prostitute, which then caused me to think of Anna, and I pleasantly remembered that I'd be seeing her later that same day. Thinking of Anna in conjunction with wanting to kill the guard, produced something of an unexpected physiological effect. Periodically in my life, I've found that the idea of killing can be awkwardly appealing. For years, I wrongly assumed that most males were like that.

There was a tiny percentage of the Spanish people, who resented, if not flat-out hated, Americans. Correspondingly, there was a concomitant percentage of Americans, who hated all Spanish, always coming up with flimsy reasons to

justify their distain, and only looking for the mistakes the Spanish people may have committed. Whether Spanish or American, these are people, who simply love to hate. While I've seen no formal study, concerning such people, I've simply run across too many of them, for that phenomena to be wrong. While in Spain, my perception was that ninety-nine percent of both the Spanish and American people, were great folks, but there's always that small percentage, for which life is only about themselves, and their incessant persistent need to despise someone else, perchance so that they can feel better about themselves, or maybe it's just that they've more gray matter, which manifests the very essence of hate, and so for them hating is unavoidable.

At the time, I didn't tell my Dad about the guard, since I figured he'd take the guard's side, simply to avoid a diplomatic incident. A few days passed and then one afternoon, I chanced a visit to the fish-trap. With my gig in-hand, I headed out, walking through the housing area, rather than along the mile stretch of beach, where the guard was more apt to be able to see me coming, from his hut. Once through the houses, and walking through an area of high brush, I was able to see that the guard was not in his hut, so I

warily headed on down to the beach. Once I was out and onto the fish-trap, I saw that the loathsome guard was about a mile away, far down at the southern end of the beach, below the cliff where my house was located. He was sitting in the sand with his back propped-up, against the base of the cliff, his rifle laid across his lap. He'd chosen the spot where the slight cliff overhang, provided him some shade.

Wrongly, I assumed that since he was about a mile away, he wouldn't bother to walk that distance, just to run me off the fish-trap. *He won't care about one kid, being on the fish-trap.* Besides, if he started walking my direction, I'd have plenty of time to leave. And so, I kept ambling along the top of the trap wall, looking for a fish to gig, I regularly glanced at the distant guard. For a while, he just continued to peacefully sit at the base of the cliff, gazing-out at the water. Maybe, he hadn't noticed me, or if he had, he didn't appear to care, so I kept walking along the wall, hoping to spot a large fish. For several reasons the larger fish were easier to spear. They tended to be slower, less perceptive, often staying closer to the surface, and because of those factors, were easier targets.

It seemed that the Spanish marine no longer cared

about me, so I became complacent about watching him. A few minutes later, I happened to glance his way, and shockingly, saw that he was quick stepping in my direction, and had closed half the distance, gun by his side in one hand, while shaking his free arm in the air at me. *Holy shit! Here comes the asshole!* Hurriedly, I got off the fish-trap, and stood on the beach, watching him angrily striding toward me. It was easy to see he was seriously pissed, his mouth was moving, but he was yet too far away for me to make-out his words. *There's no reasoning with this jerk.* Obviously, I had been wrong, about assuming he was indifferent, concerning my being on the fish-trap.

He was still too far away to hear, but it was apparent that he was yelling vulgarities. *Maybe he's having trouble with his wife!* I knew I'd have to leave the beach, if he got much closer. When he was less than a quarter of a mile away, I finally could make-out various Spanish curse words, including the fact that my mother was again being referred to as a prostitute, and there were orders for me to get off the beach, or he was going to do some serious physical harm to my genitals. *He is colorful!*

The lunatic guard was seething with rage. Recalling Luke's head being smashed into the ground, and that

the guard had no legal right to order me off the beach, seemed to kindle a minor rage in me. Like a supersonic disease, his hatred had magically spread, through the air, what was then just under a quarter mile, from him to me. *Who is this fucking bozo to think he can take our beach and our fish-trap?* The Spanish marine looked utterly ridiculous, stumbling, and acting slightly clumsy, which made me wonder, if he wasn't a wee bit drunk. *This isn't his beach. It belonged to us!* The guard probably wasn't even following anyone's orders. He just felt the need to assert his authority and boss around some young American kids, which he had decided were spoiled. If indeed he'd assumed that, he wasn't completely wrong. He clearly loved to play the role of the crazed tyrant!

In those days, the Spanish people didn't employ the middle finger as an explicit congenial gesture. While giving someone the finger dates back to the ancient Greece and Roman empires, the Spanish didn't use that particular symbol of the phallus. Instead, they'd cross their forearms, violently thrusting one forearm straight upward, while the other would be held parallel to the earth to brace the other vertical forearm. This gesture was usually accompanied by some threatening oath.

That day, I'd had enough of that prejudice ill tempered moron, so once back on the beach, I struck my gig in the sand, crossed my forearms, jamming my right fist vertically, in the sign of true international friendship. Unexpectedly, the maniac instantly stopped walking, shifted his right foot behind himself, shouldered his rifle, wobbled a bit, and aimed it dead at me. *That stupid bastard is definitely drunk, but he'd never actually shoot me!* For a moment he stopped wobbling. *He can't fool me. Nobody shoots a kid.* He had no real authority. *That asshole is bluffing.* Not believing that he'd really pull the trigger, I continued my manual diplomat gesture of friendship; for truly, I wanted him to know how fond I was of him. Suddenly, I felt rhetorically inspired, and decided to add a loud well known gente American greeting.

"Fuck you, Shithead!" I screamed at the top of my lungs.

That's when, I saw his old rifle jump up, then I heard a quick little 'fippp' sound in the air, somewhere just over my head, and a corresponding tiny 'thump' noise in the hard dirt cliff wall, just behind me. A second later, I heard the distant report of the powerful old weapon. Then from somewhere



closer, I heard a kid yell, “Run, Joey! Run, now! Run, man...run!” It wasn’t an auditory hallucination in my head, but an actual voice, telling me to run, yet no one was near me. *The bastard just shot at me! Holy shit! Move! Move! Move!* My brain bellowed, while sending a set of motor signals to my skinny legs.

Right then, I imagined that he was working the rifle bolt, chambering a second cartridge into the breach, but I didn’t take the time to look. Grabbing my gig, I just turned and ran. Perhaps it was Churchill who said something like, “There is nothing in life so exhilarating as to be shot at without result.” Still, while Churchill was certainly far more gifted than I in all ways but foolishness, the shark greatly surpassed the rifle shot for sheer exhilaration; nevertheless, both were oddly heady.

Gig in hand, I ran in a serpentine fashion, as Dad had once instructed me, until I was around the end of the cliff, and out of the guard’s sight. The sand immensely slowed my running, so it seemed like it took forever to turn the corner of the cliff wall, when in fact it was probably less than ten-seconds. When you expect to be on the receiving end of a low flying bullet, no matter how fast you run, it probably feels slow. I have no idea what the guard did next, but I

assumed he was in the process getting ready to squeeze off another round, or he was chasing after me to get a closer for a better shot.

Hidden from the guard's view, I ascended the more gradual slope. Jamming my gig in a crack in the slope to hide it, so I was free to use both hands and legs to quickly climb the slope. Running past the guard shack, I saw Luke stepping out from inside of the shack. It was then, I realized that it had been Luke's voice telling me to run, right after the shot had zipped passed. We both began to talk as we were running towards our school. It was the closest hiding place.

"Christ! That asshole shot at you, Joey! I saw him do it!" Luke declared as he ran, angling in to join me.

"No shit, man! I heard the ballet go passed me, then I heard you yell for me to run!" I responded.

"Well... I didn't want you to get shot, Joey! And you just stood there like a dumb-ass, crossing your arms, making that stupid 'fuck-you' gesture. But, I got to hand it to you! You did the right thing, Joey!"

"I couldn't believe he actually shot at me!" I responded.

"Can't fuck'n believe you gave him that Spanish

‘fuck-you’ sign, and called him a ‘shithead.’ Way to go, Joey!” Luke praised me.

“Thanks, Luke. I have my moments.” I said. *That’s one of Dad’s favorite expressions.*

“You’re just lucky he’s a bad shot. You know we’ve really got to pay his ass back, Joey.” Luke insisted.

“What kind of evil shit you got in mind, Luke?” I inquired.

“I’ve been working on that. I got a bunch of ideas, since he kicked my legs out from under me, but we need to get together on it... talk a little strategy. I’m staying on his six.” He suggested.

“Can’t wait to hear, what you’ve thought of. That fucking bastard needs his ass torn-out of the frame. It’s time to go drastic on him, Luke.”

“No shit, Joey. I’d like to kill him.” *Dad would agree with doing that.*

The guard shooting at me and Luke’s comments had awakened my interest in retaliation. Our minds became focused on payback. The humiliation of that day, when Luke had been knocked to the sand, had been eating a hole in his soul. The fact that the guard had shot at me, removed all constraints on our

retaliation. Luke and I sat at the school's playground and sorted through various ideas. We also discussed the fact that the guard might yet try to kill us. Because, he probably realized that we'd be gunning for him.

Luke mentioned, that right before I'd been shot at, he had been in the guard's hut, and seen three big empty wine bottles, indicating the guard may have been drunk, when he shot at me. Judging from how he'd staggered and wobbled on the beach that day, it seemed likely. The booze probably explained his shooting at me, since a fair percentage of males get surly, when drunk. I've known a number of men like that. They may be polite and sociable most of the time, but once they start drinking an angry transformation ensues, and they either become more and more obnoxious. Often, such folks are indeed dangerous. Thank God, drunks usually make crappy fighters, but heaven help you, if the drunk finds some sort of a weapon, as the guard had on the beach that day.

Obviously, I couldn't tell Dad about what had happened, for while he would have definitely made sure the guard was punished, my friends and I would never again have been able to use the beach, or the

fish-traps. Even though I was fairly certain that the guard didn't know where I lived, I took precautions, when entering or leaving my house.

Late that night, after I'd sipped my nightly two fingers of whiskey, I'd make sure all the doors were locked in the house, then I'd go back to my bedroom, and silently close and lock my door. Opening my closet, I'd pull-out my shotgun, load it with the powerful solid brass big-game shells, then put its butt on the ground and prop its barrel on my bed's headboard. Lastly, I'd slowly and quietly drag my bureau half way in front of my bedroom door. If the guard tried to get in my room, the bureau would give me more time to ready the shotgun.

In the morning, when I heard my parent's alarm clock ring-out, I'd quickly unload the gun and replace it in the closet, then repositioned the bureau, and silently unlocked my bedroom door. While I too was an alcoholic, I behaved nothing like the drunk Spanish Marine. Male alcoholics tend to be evenly split into two groups. They're either cordial when drinking, or they're assholes. There's nothing worse than an overbearing, overly aggressive male alcoholic, unless it's one with a gun. Most female alcoholics are far less threatening.

Everywhere I went, I stayed on the lookout for that Spanish guard, continually scanning my surroundings, afraid he was watching me with his long-range 7 mm rifle. Living with that fear, reminded me of the fear I'd had for Fritz the cat, when I was terrified to go outside at my Grandparent's house. In turn, the fear made me think about sneaking into the guard shack, one night while the guard was drunk and sleeping, using both hands, nailing him hard in the head, with Dad's twenty ounce claw hammer, claw first, then taking the hammer to the beach to wash-off the brains and blood in the salt water, and quietly return it to Dad's toolbox.

Another idea was to burn the guard. Dad kept a gallon can of gasoline in the outside patio-shed for the lawnmower, so naturally I thought of dousing the sleeping guard, and then quickly, while he was awakening and wondering what had just been splashed on him, light him up. But the base commanding officer only lived a couple of hundred yards from there, and the idea of a human torch running into the CO's yard seemed problematic, since I'd still have to have time run home and get in my bed, and there was no doubt that the first person the

CO would call was his second in command, namely my Dad. Besides, Dad would notice the missing gas, if I couldn't replace it in time. At first, the hammer idea seemed the most doable. One cold night after my usual two fingers, I grabbed the hammer and went so far as to walk halfway to the guard hut, with the hammer, but I chickened out. The idea of killing the guard that way, and by myself, was harder than I thought. To this day, I feel that the cold air contributed to my losing my nerve.

In the days that followed, we came up with various ideas to deal with the guard. One idea was to steal his rifle, while he was sleeping, and shoot the base commander's new *XK150 Jaguar* sports car, right through the hood and engine block. We'd thought we could muffle the sound by shooting through a thick pillow. Then, we'd return the gun to guard shack, leaving the telltale spent brass casing next to the car. In addition, using gloves, we'd put one of the guard's discarded wine bottles, with his fingerprints on it, in the CO's front yard. It would appear that the guard had gotten drunk, and shot the car as a prank. For that stunt, the Spanish admiral would go ape shit on the guard.

Because of my Grandpa, I was always thinking in

terms of evidence. I loved the idea of the guard's fingerprints on the bottle. Once Grandpa explained how simple fingerprints were to use, I was surprised that they didn't come into use sooner. You don't really need a microscope; a powerful magnifying lens will suffice. Why it took so long (the 1800s and early 1900s) for the world to begin get around to recognizing the use of fingerprints in criminology is a true mystery. On the other hand, Chinese records from before 200 BC in the Qin Dynasty, contain details about using handprints for evidence, during burglary investigations! Grandpa was always preaching evidence. We four kids genuinely liked the idea of shooting the CO's *Jaguar*, and almost went for it. What stopped us from carrying out the plan was the simple fact that it wasn't fair to the base CO.

Another plan was to wait for the guard to walk the beach one night, then douse the guard shack in Spanish bottles of bourbon and torch it off, leave the empty bottles, without our prints, inside the burned shack, implying that the guard had gotten drunk, and accidentally burned-down his hut. But we decided that the fire was just too spectacular, and may not allow us time to get home and in bed, before the Shore Patrol showed-up, or the nearby base CO



called and woke-up Dad.

We even followed the evil Spanish Marine off the base, to his humble residence. The reasoning behind our following him was that we thought that one night, while he was in his guard shack on the base, we'd climb the perimeter fence and go burn down his home, with all his possessions inside. The problem with that idea was that his tiny house was jammed-up, against neighboring houses, so we scotched the arson plan. Besides, the landlord, who owned the place, didn't need to suffer, and committing a crime in Spain proper was a big deal... not to mention, the severity of Spanish jails. Rota was a highly populated little town, and the likelihood of our being noticed, was too great for comfort.

We finally settled on a fairly risky, somewhat complicated, plan, which could easily have killed the guard, and if it had, I don't think any of us honestly cared; after all, the bullet seemed to have missed me by about three feet but was fired from roughly a quarter mile away. There was also the matter of the guard's battery on Luke, and his countless verbal insults, concerning our mothers. Please realize that we all were the sons of combat pilots, and consequently possessed a slightly skewed perspective

about killing assholes. Moreover, my Grandpa had indirectly taught me that you can't always depend on the law for justice. Lots of crimes go unsolved, and even when solved, a good lawyer can set them free.

One week later, the first step of our plan was ready to go. As stated, when Luke had been nosing around in the tiny guard shack, the day the guard had shot at me, he'd seen three empty wine bottles. So, we knew the staggering guard was likely a serious drinker, and as mentioned, was probably drunk when he'd shot at me, and maybe even when he'd foot-swept Luke to the ground. Friday nights, that particular guard sleep the night in the little hut. The hut had no power and no water. He didn't get off work till early Saturday morning, when another guard came to relieve him. We knew this, because we'd have to wait till he'd left Saturday morning, if we wanted to fish the fish-trap.

Late one Friday afternoon, we waited in the woods on the edge of the housing area, watching the guard drinking and milling around his hut. When he finally left walking, on one of his long patrols, down the length of the mile-long beach, we knew we had at least forty-five minutes, before he'd return. At the plywood base of the guard shack, in the middle of

the side, away from the cliff, grew a one foot tall dried-out bush. It grew-up out of the sand, right at the base of the shack. We uprooted the small scrub, and then Luke used his hands and a long-handled kitchen spoon, which we normally used to dig for coins on the beach, to dig-out a small tunnel about four inches in diameter, extending about a third of the way under the floor of the guard hut.

We then partly carried-out our proposed plan to make sure it would work. Using my wagon, we had transported a twelve foot piece of strong, two and a half inch pipe, and a one foot section of thick log to the site. Had anyone stopped to question us, we were going to say that it was a *Boy Scout* merit badge project, yet no one took notice.

Using the pipe, the hole Luke had dug under the shack floor, and the thick log the four of us tested-out our proposed plan. Once we were satisfied that it would indeed work, we then buried the pipe, and the section of fat log, in the sand about forty feet away from the guard hut, in an area with a lot of dry bushes. Luke then used a little sand to barely fill-in the entrance to the narrow little tunnel, then we replanted the uprooted bush to further conceal the entrance to the freshly dug narrow passage, under

guard shack. Last, using another small piece of bush, we swept the area clean of our footprints and my wagon's tracks, as we departed. The payback plan was planned for later that night, but unexpectedly it rained, delaying us, until the following Friday night. The one-week delay proved beneficial, since it allowed us to one additional refinement to the plan.

Early that next Friday evening, we waited till the guard had gone on his scheduled beach patrol, and while he was gone we left a bottle of Spanish brandy, using garden gloves, being careful not to leave fingerprints. That was the important refinement to the plan. We'd gotten the brandy in Puerto, and left the bottle next to the entrance of the shack, with a note attached with red ribbon, which said that the gift was from Capt. Hazelson, the American Commanding Officer of the base. The message said that the brandy was for the outstanding guard-work, protecting the new submarine pier.

We gotten the aforementioned gardener with the motorcycle, Jose, to write the note for us. He realized that we were doing something outside the norm, and so he carefully disguised his handwriting.

Andalusians were not too different from Sicilians, in that they tended to be understanding about the need

for vengeance, if it was warranted. Jose had been shocked upon hearing that the guard had cranked-off a round at me, not to mention his smashing Luke's head into the sand. At first, he wasn't sure if he believed me, then Luke offered his eye witness testimony, and so Jose was instantly onboard with our proposed revenge. Later, the four of us reciprocated for his helping us with the note. Jose was a young single guy, whence one evening, we hired one of the best looking young hookers, southern Spain had to offer, and escorted her to Jose's house. We stood hidden while she knocked on the door. Of course, I didn't mention Anna, as a possible candidate. We had all climbed the fence, and chipped-in for the gift. The four of us kids walked around surveying the available prostitutes, and had hand-selected the most gorgeous girl. She had light dirty blond hair, was about five foot two, a tight shapely frame, and an erotic, semi-evil, but definitely sexy, face. It was amazing how far five dollars could go in then... all the way to heaven.

Besides the brandy bottle, we made sure there were no fingerprints on the note. The common note paper had come from a small Spanish dry goods store, just

off the base, the piece of red ribbon, from a neighborhood trashcan. We'd used a hole punch in the note to attach the ribbon. We knew we could trust Jose; after all, he'd let us ride his motorcycle, plus we'd been good to him, with the occasional little gifts, small amounts of cash in his saddlebags, as well as squid, fish, and eels, we'd caught at the fish-trap.

Some people love to find any reason for revenge, since it allows them an excuse to unleash their darker chunks of gray matter. It's not too different in world politics. A Palestinian kills one Jew, and the Jews use gunships to take-out an entire block of Palestinians. The gift of brandy was to better assure that the guard would be in a sound slumber, making it safer for us to carry-out our mission. All hell would have broken loose, had the angry guard awoken, and caught us during our operation.

Typically, the military families on the base would go to bed early, most of them around nine or nine thirty. Many of the men had to be at work by six thirty or seven the next morning, so they got-up around five. Back then, parents tended to use a lot of one line quotes, about getting up early. One particularly popular saying was, *"Early to bed early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."*

Benjamin Franklin said that, and he also said something about the early morning having gold in its mouth. Indeed, Ben was a wealthy capitalist, and all about making the gold. Franklin was the youngest son of 17 kids. His father was a poverty-stricken candle-maker. He simply couldn't afford to his seventeen kids. So young Franklin had to make his own opportunities in life, and died one of the richest men in America. His net worth was over forty million dollars, which would make him a multibillionaire, today.

The four of us snuck-out of our houses at an appointed time of midnight, and meant-up on the edge of the housing area, not one hundred feet from the little guard shack. Getting to rendezvous was simply a matter of watching-out for patrolling shore patrol. Shore Patrol. Security was light that night, since on most Friday nights, much of the base security was devoted to dealing with drunk sailors in the local bars in nearby towns. Besides, there were no terrorists in those days, so no needed tight base security. Once in position on the edge of the woods, about one hundred yards from the guard hut, none of us spoke. Because of our Dad's, we were well aware

of things like: keeping a secret, stealth, following orders, acting in unison, the importance of staying in shape, hand signals, preparation, trusting in your comrades and training, as well as sticking to the plan. Our Dads regularly drilled us about such things.

According to plan, Luke first ran a brief recon on the guard shack and returned to give us the silent thumbs-up, indicating that the guard was sleeping like a baby. We then all put on our gardening gloves. Silently, we dug-up the buried big log and steel pipe, quietly rolling the short piece of thick log to the side of the shack, then we carried over the pipe. We were careful to make sure the holes where we'd dug-up the log and pipe were left open with a couple of uprooted bushes nearby, so that our equipment could be quickly reburied, after our mission. Luke silently extracted the formerly uprooted bush at the base of the guard shack, and soundlessly we inserted the end of the long stiff pipe into the hole, under the plywood floor of the shack.

When we were sliding the pipe under the wooden floor, we made one small scrapping sound, and so for ten long seconds, we all froze, fearing that the noise might have awakened the drunk guard, but he remained fast asleep. His feet were barely sticking



out the shack's door and we could hear his windy inebriated breathing. After that, the four of us were moving soundlessly, and without uttering a word, acting in perfect choreography. Our fake note, with the ribbon still attached, from Capt. Hazelson was lying just inside the entrance to the shack, so I leaned inside and pocketed it. Retrieving the note was one less piece of evidence to worry about. Later, I would tell Jose about recovering and destroying the note and ribbon, to ease his concern, about his participation. The shack was dark, and smelled of the guard's alcoholic sweat and breath. He was sprawled out on his back, still dressed in his uniform and boots. The rifle was propped-up in one corner of the wall.

Luke and I lifted the pipe, while Scotty and Billy rolled the log under it. In that way, the pipe became the lever, and the log formed the fulcrum. Quickly and simultaneously, digging in our feet, Luke and I placed our palms on the side of the shack, and with Luke's head nod, we pushed hard as we could toward the ninety foot precipice, as Scotty and Billy pulled down on the end of the pipe. In this manner, the four of us forced the shack to tilt over the edge of the steep incline. With our silent unified efforts, the

shack tilted right out and over the edge into the moonlit steep drop. The drop wasn't straight down, but it wasn't too far from it. There was a full bright moon out that fateful night, and the strange sight of the shack launching-out over the edge appeared somewhat otherworldly. *There's no turning back, now!*

As the hut started over the edge, the guard didn't make a peep. Then as it silently reached a horizontal position, we could hear the guard's comatose body eerily roll toward the cliff-side of the shack, making a pronounced, but softly muffled, 'thud.' We all ran to the end of the cliff to watch. The top of the pointed shack continued to nose over, falling out and down into black space. Next, we heard the guard's rifle, and the brandy bottle banging loudly on the inside plywood walls. These ominous sounds were fairly shocking. Again, there was another loud thud as his body comatose body slammed into the top of the shack, which was then rapidly headed downwards; still, the guard hadn't yelled, and that seemed creepy. *What am I going to do, if he dies?* Dad was always talking about the importance of diplomacy, so if the guard died, it would have been a huge headache for Dad! On the other hand, Dad had always said that certain evil people are better off

dead and not to worry about killing them, but just don't get caught.

As mentioned, at this location on the northern end of the cliff, there wasn't a full-fledged ninety degree drop. It was more like an extremely steep decline, and the bottom ten feet the cliff wall nicely curved out onto the beach. A third of the way down the cliff, the hut slammed down hard on its side, and rapidly slid downward, for about another thirty feet. Then, its pointed roof, dug-in to the dirt steep slope, so it went end-over-end once, and somehow ended-up sideways, and began to roll faster and faster, kind of like a high speed rolling-pin, picking up some reckless rpms. That's about when the guard started shrieking loudly, sounding like a terrified old woman, and he continued to shriek, during the last of the downward journey. *God, can he yell! I sure hope he doesn't awaken anyone!*

The hut's plywood and framing came completely apart as the shack rolled, breaking apart on the beach, and the screaming drunk guard rolled out of what was left of the destroyed structure. We all stood on the edge looking down, wondering about the guard. He then suddenly quit moving and went silent, consequently, for a couple of long seconds, we

were thinking he'd died. I'm fairly certain, that at that instant, we were all scared. The inebriated guard just laid there, in the moonlight, spread-eagle on his back, not moving a muscle. From that distance in the moonlight, we couldn't see if he was breathing.

Then he began to moan and cry loudly. Next, with his left arm, he reached across his chest to hold his right elbow. For a few seconds, he didn't move, but just held that arm and cried. Then all of the sudden, he got up and began to run around on the shadowy moonlit beach screaming and holding his injured arm. *He's probably got a broken arm! Great!* The moon was behind us, so he couldn't see us. If anything, we were only silhouettes to him.

Luke gave us the prearranged signal and at the speed of light, we returned the log and the pipe to their respective open holes and quickly reburied them, then covered them with bushes. We also filled-in the tunnel we had made under the shack for the pipe, smoothed the sand, by sweeping it with the uprooted bushes, to sweep the sand of our tracks, till we got in the woods, then we took-off for our respective homes. We did all those things silently, and in less than thirty-seconds. All the while, we could hear the guard bellowing and finally cursing, down on the

beach. He was badly hurt, and clearly angry. We, on the other hand, were extraordinarily happy. Throughout the mission, we hadn't uttered a single word, and had stuck to our plan.

Once we were about a half mile away, we all began to laugh, but in a muted fashion, lest we awaken some neighbors. We also kept an eye out for the Shore Patrol. After sneaking back through my bedroom window, I torn-up Jose's note, into a million tiny pieces and flushed them down the toilet, then briefly turned on the bathroom light to make sure every piece of the note had gone down the drain. At last, I headed for the liquor cabinet, and three fingers of my ever soporific brown scotch, but still sleep largely escaped me that night. Sipping my drink outside on the back patio, I could see the red lights of the shore patrol vehicles, across the curve of the bayshore. They were undoubtedly trying to figure-out what happened and had probably taken the injured guard to the base hospital. No doubt, Dad would soon be called, so I shortly finished my drink while sitting in bed. After a few minutes, I heard our phone ringing, and it wasn't long and I heard Dad start the car and pull-out of the driveway.

Our mission had been just retribution, with a little

panache. Then I began to think about how to handle the situation, when and if Dad were to question me, and I realized the odds were in favor of the questioning. Sleep didn't come till the sun was transgressing the horizon, but it was a Saturday, so I didn't mind. Just like Ben had said, gold was definitely in the mouth of that morning, as I headed to Mr. White's to attend a pigeon shoot, but his wife said he had been unexpectedly called in to work. I suspected it had to do with the guard shack going off the cliff. So instead, I climbed the fence and went to Anna's. She was getting ready to go to the pigeon shoot, and waiting for her 'date' to come pick her up, so there was no time for sex that day, but she let me stay in her place, while she was gone, telling me to be out before sundown, so I figured she'd be bringing some guy back with her. A horn honked out front, and Anna flew out the door, smiling her ever dazzling smile as she climbed in his red Mercedes. Peeking through the curtains, I watched him steal a kiss, as she slid up against his right side and put her arm around his shoulders, right before they motored away.

I slept away the afternoon in her overstuffed bed. When I awoke, I cooked a cheese omelet, did the

dishes, stole a couple shots of her whiskey, then walked back to the base, to watch people shoot skeet and trap at the range, until it was time to go home. People at the gun range were already talking about the guard shark going off the cliff and the injured guard. Prior to leaving the range, I managed to get a couple of beers, to steady my nerves, before facing Dad at dinner that night. There was no doubt that he'd bring-up the guard shack incident.

The toppled guard shack and injured guard had created a major diplomatic rift between the American and Spanish military. The guard had broken his upper arm, which had required surgery. We four kids didn't feel a bit bad about the guard's injury. After all, he had run us from our beach, knocked Luke to the ground, repeatedly insulted our mothers, and shot at me. It was our preferred belief that the guard had meant to kill me, since he missed me by roughly three feet from a quarter of a mile distance, and was probably drunk at the time. Plainly, the guard hated all Americans, and the broken arm was exactly what he deserved.

It was less than ten-seconds into the dinner that evening, when Dad brought-up the guard shack going off the cliff. He'd been called into work on early that

Saturday morning, solely because of that incident, so indirectly my friends and I had ruined Dad's day-off. According to Dad, the local Spanish Admiral was 'up in arms' about the injured Spanish Marine. That night at dinner, the entire time Mom was blessing the food, Dad was glaring down the length of the table at me, trying to sweat me, but I knew that was coming, so Dad's scowl was without apparent effect. Knowing Dad so well was like the world's best early warning system.

When Mom finally uttered, "...Amen," Dad moved right in on me, but I fully anticipated that the inquisition, so I'd quickly shoveled a large forkful of mashed potatoes and gravy in my mouth to buy a few seconds to better formulate a cogent reply to whatever Dad was about to say. I just pointed at my mouth, indicating to Dad I needed a few seconds to get the food down. All day and the evening before, I'd been preparing for this moment, so I was feeling confident.

"Joey, last night some person or persons pushed that guard shack off the cliff, right down there at the other end of the beach, with the sleeping guard still inside, right there by the fish-traps! (Dad said this pointing in the direction of where the guard shack



had stood, about a mile from our home.) That poor guard could have been killed! Luckily, he just broke his arm, and needed emergency surgery! The Spanish guard hut was a total loss. The Spanish Admiral and their Marines are hopping mad about it. You don't happen to know anything about, do you young man?" Dad said this with a bright red faced, unblinking, leaning toward me, in more than a slightly accusatory manner. Whenever Dad's face turned red like that, his eyes appeared brilliantly blue.

That afternoon, the people at the skeet and trap range, had been talking about 'the Spanish guard incident,' so admitting to knowing about it was safe. Casually chewing the mashed potatoes and gravy for more time to think, and to develop the needed psychological posture, I tried to look barely interested, rather than worried, which I definitely was. As I chewed, I nodded my head in affirmation. The slow chewing and my nonchalance was a part of my bluff, made to look as if I was unconcerned. Shallowing, I smiled and calmly began with my grandiose lie. *God, I love to lie!*

"Yeah! I heard about that, Dad. That poor Spanish guard! I'm sure glad he wasn't killed. Lots of people

on the base are talking about it, especially at the gun range. I think they built the hut too close to the cliff and the ground just broke-out from under it.

“No, Joey. The ground didn’t breakout from under it! I think his hut was shoved off the cliff!” Dad countered.

“Dad, do you think it could have been a Russian spy try’n to get to a submarine, taking out the guard, first? It’s a wonder that guard didn’t die, as tall as that cliff is... ninety feet... wow!” I’d actually forged this ridiculous fabrication the night before, while lying in bed.

Dad gave me a look like he couldn’t believe I’d said something so ludicrous. He strongly suspected, that I was filled to the eyebrows with warm bull manure. The beers from the shooting range were still working, and I felt a little too relaxed, so Dad’s anger seemed slightly humorous; nevertheless, I certainly didn’t smile.

“I seriously doubt that, Joey!” Dad scowled back. He sensed that I was trying to turn his interrogation into a brainless mare’s nest.

“Gee, Dad! I don’t know. Aren’t there some highly classified things on those subs the Russkies

would want?" I persisted with my folly.

"The foods great, Mom!" I said, trying to change the topic and to appear unaffected about the Spanish guard and Dad's interrogation.

In response to the compliment, Mom cut loose with a big smile. Apparently she wasn't in on Dad's inquisition, and believed me to be guiltless. Dad quickly steered the conversation back to the guard shack.

"None of the watch officers reported anything, out of the ordinary. Nothing happened on or to the subs." Dad now seemed more irritated.

"That's good, Dad! Then why would anyone push the guard shack off the cliff?" I countered, while shutting my shoulders and attempting to completely turn tables, and look unconcerned.

I'd put-on my best questioning look. Then, shoveled-in another load of mashed potatoes and gravy to stall for additional time. Asking Dad a question may have worked to make me appear innocent, because Dad then blinked and looked down. At that moment, it seemed that doubt had crept into his grilling of me, and he'd begun to contemplate my possible innocence.

“That’s the mystery, Joey. However, the guard has mentioned that he thought it may have been some kids.”

With the word, “kids,” Dad suddenly looked up and drilled me with his crystal clear blue eyes, and with his black right eyebrow severely arched, as if to say, ‘I’ve got you now!’ But Dad and I had played poker, for as long as I could recall. He was the man, who’d taught me the fine art of bluffing. So, there was no way that his intimidation with the arched eyebrow, even remotely fazed me. I was ready and poised for further deception; after all, I had inherited my Grandpa’s liar gene, and it was working smoothly.

Continuing to chew my food at the dangerous revelation about the guard having mentioned children, I just acted as if Dad had said nothing of any consequence, but Mom was now looking at me, too. She’d begun to realize that Dad might have had something going. Both of them continued to glare at me. I continued to chew the mash potatoes, and in order to appear innocent, I began to dab a forkful of mash potatoes in the green peas, and to think of my last time being with Anna, so I seemed unfazed by Dad’s accusation. This particular strategy I had also

thought of the night before.

My parents seemed to have the mistaken idea that the combined weight of their stares might bring me to Jesus, only I'd given-up Jesus for Anna, the bullfights, and the pigeon shooting, but mostly for Anna. In my child's mind, Jesus and Santa Claus were equally probable. For me, my parent's combined stares were just like throwing money into the pot on a bad poker bluff. If I succeeded, it would be an even greater win. Clearly, Dad had no proof. I was pushing my bluff for all the chips, and feeling confident. Dad had taught me that when you run a bluff, you show nothing, and you never waver, unless its time to fold, but I knew then, that my parents were entirely uncertain; in effect, their poker hands were empty, and I held all the aces.

"Really? Kids, Dad? You know Dad, if it was kids, then that guard must have done something pretty awful, to make them wanta push him and his shack over the cliff. Whoever did it, they're lucky they only broke his arm. But you know, Dad, it had to have been the teenagers, cuz kids couldn't have been strong enough to push that big heavy guard shack over the cliff. Unless it was a whole bunch of kids, and that's sorta ridiculous. Wouldn't you say? If

it was a gang of kids, you'd have heard about who did it. Besides, the guard would have heard a group of kids coming. That hut probably weighed a ton. I've seen it, Dad. I saw it, when the Spanish marines were building it. It had to be strong teenagers, or maybe some other Spanish marines, playing a trick on their buddy."

"Just what do you think the guard may have done, Joey?" Dad pressed. *He got the hint.*

At this point Dad was starting to believe me, and had grasped the nugget of truth in my confabulation. He was seriously considering my lie about teenagers committing the crime, since the shack was indeed large and heavy. Looking at Mom, I could tell she once again believed I was innocent, since she'd stopped staring, and had gone back to eating her dinner. Mom was always an easy sell, compared to Dad.

"I don't know Dad, but that guard had to have done something real bad. Heck, he was probably mean to them. Maybe he even used that gun to shoot at one of them, or something. He carries that rifle everywhere he goes, you know! Maybe he cursed them or beat'm up. Who knows? Everyone knows that he doesn't like Americans. Like I said, maybe

some of his fellow Spanish marines hated him, too. Maybe the other Spanish Marines knew he'd had a run-in with some American teenagers, and used that as their cover to push him off the cliff. You should find-out what the other Spanish Marines think of him. I'll bet they probably know what really happened. Word is, that that guard is meaner than snot, Dad. Heck, I heard that someone said that he called one teenager's mother a prostitute!"

"My goodness! That's horrible!" Mom responded in shocked amazement.

At that comment, my mother affected her own mother's famous fake shiver. She didn't approve of my even using the word, 'prostitute.' She'd have killed me, if she'd found out about my visits with Anna.

"Maybe he's a real bad drunk, Dad. People have seen him staggering around on the beach. But I've got to admit, he's always been nice to me and my friends, but we're just kids. He seemed polite to me. But he might have had a run-in with the older teenagers. Maybe they took their dates to the beach and he ran them off. But, I kinda like the guard, Dad. I feel sorry for the poor guy spending all that time alone in that little shack, and then getting shoved off

the cliff, like that... breaking his poor arm. Some one should be shot for doing that! You know Dad, he may have done it himself, just so he wouldn't have to do that boring job anymore." Finishing this eloquent summation, I used the knife's serrated edge and cut a piece of steak, again telling Mom that the meal was delicious. Mom again smiled, and I smiled back.

Mixed in with all the confabulations, I had actually given Dad the entire truth of it, while still lying about my involvement. Chewing the piece of steak, I realized that I honestly enjoyed lying; after all, most people do enjoy what they're best at. *I was born to lie.*

Dad had been extremely determined, and so I figured that the guard must have described us; still, I knew that the guard hadn't actually seen or heard us, the night we shoved him over, so I also knew that neither the guard, nor Dad could possibly be completely certain. Nevertheless, the guard may have lied and said he'd actually seen us, assuming that we were the only people with a motive to shove him over the edge; still, a man like him, had to have other enemies.

At that moment, Dad decided to launch out of the realm of the hypothetical, and make one more



last stab at breaking me down. He wanted the unadulterated truth, and he wanted it, then. It was obvious that he thought I could have been involved, but he wasn't certain.

“Joey, if you know something, this is the time to own-up! Now! Do you hear me? Not tomorrow... now! I need to hear it straight, and I need to heard it right this second! So let's get serious, son. Did you help push the guard off the cliff?” He explosively questioned me, while my good Mom looked shocked at his accusation, as if to say Dad had gone too far.

When he made this demand, Dad had nearly broken his right index finger, jamming it three times into the top of the mahogany dining room table, which he'd recently refinished, but had used way too much dark stain. It was so much brown stain, he might have just as well used brown paint. My dear Dad had no sense of style or taste, but then, neither do I. By then, Dad's face had turned a deep scarlet, and again I was amazed how blue his eyes appeared. Dad's ancestors supposedly came from Scotland. Mom's ancestors were mostly from Sicily, and was probably the origin of my liar gene.

This made sense to me. Mom was so good at creating falsehoods, that she was nearly impossible to

catch. She gotten the liar gene from her Dad, just as I had... from one of his two testicles, which had been bouncing outside the overly tight swim trunks, that day at the beach house. In our family, I was the best liar of the lot, essentially because I loved lying, like I loved breathing. Everyone needs to have at least one claim to fame, one outstanding talent. That particular trait would continue to improve, until I reached the age of forty, then with the late development of my conscience, the enjoyment of lying began to slowly fade, and with it my use of lying.

On the other hand, Dad was impeccably honest, perhaps because of the ugly truths he'd fought so hard against in the wars. In his mind, he'd fought for truth, and probably had. However, it was that streak of righteousness, which was Dad's greatest weakness; he was just too honest, and therefore he couldn't fathom how just dishonest Mom and I could be. When it came to truthfulness, Dad and I were polar opposites, but in certain respects that can be the same.

Even so, he could run a mean bluff in poker, but when it came to actual real-life lying, he just didn't have it, nor did he want it. Where Dad detested a lie, I admired it. Conceivably, the problem with lies is

whether or not you can comfortably live with them, and take them to the grave. I'm extremely comfortable and happy to take all of them to the grave. I've lied so often, I've forgotten most of them, and so I have no choice but to take them to the grave. Even at that young age, I was very nearly a prideful world class prevaricator.

They'll have to hire someone with a very large bulldozer to complete the task of burying me with all my lies.

*The Ancient Tasking at Hand* by Adriano Wayer Miller

Doesn't God know the truth, anyway? If so, is a lie honestly a lie, especially if it's for the greater good? If I had been an apple, the worms love me, and I had fallen to earth several hundred miles southeast of Dad's Scottish tree, landing somewhere in Sicily. Actually my Grandfather's surname was a rare Sicilian modification of the family's original Hebrew name. Supposedly, in the 1700s, my maternal Grandfather's family was the only Jewish family allowed to live in Sicily, since someone in the

family had done something helpful to some Sicilian politicians. Consequently, a tiny portion of my DNA was similar to the Jewish commander's, who bought my coins on the base in Rota. Perhaps that's why, I enjoyed listening to his advice, and felt a distant kinship.

The marked deficiency in Dad's dinner time interrogation, about the guard's getting shoved off the cliff, was that he had not offered any form of immunity from prosecution... no guarantee for my truthful testimony. Nothing like, "Joey, if you tell me the truth, I'll make sure nothing happens to those involved. I promise, I'll make no mention, if you just tell me the truth. Honestly, it will stay between us."

During the meal, I was hoping that he'd think of saying that, still I had been sworn to secrecy by my friends and could not break my vow. Had Dad said those words, it would have meant that he'd protect us kids, and that he cared enough to put our wellbeing above the concerns of the evil Spanish Marine and the Spanish Admiral. Still, I would have had to discuss the offer with my friends, before talking with Dad, and they would have said, 'no.'

Had I told Dad the entire truth, including what the guard had done to us, he would have realized

that the guard had gotten exactly what he deserved. Of course, such a confession still would have been the end of my going to the beach, so I remained in the imaginative mendacious mode, and a little disappointed that Dad hadn't thought to try to protect me, but Dad only cared about the truth. In my mind, my friends and I had done the right thing. We'd administered the required justice, proportionate to the crime. Another mistake Dad made was asking me in front of Mom. Had I been foolish enough to confess, then Mom would have been like the town-crier. Most likely, she'd inherited that trait from her gossipy mother. Mom loves gossip, just like Grandma did.

Dad would have been the only one I would have trusted. There was the off chance, that if it came out, that I had been involved, Dad would lose his position as the base executive officer. The Spanish military would have demanded it, since diplomacy on the base was paramount, regardless of how bad the guard had been. The Americans were insisting that no American was involved in the guard hut going off the cliff. The Spanish assumed the opposite. In conjunction with Dad's last attempt at getting me to confess, I put on an expression of hurt innocence,

and issued forth with the most devastating and unholy lie, I could manage.

“Gee Dad, I really don’t know anything. I sure couldn’t have pushed that shack off the cliff. I swear to God!”

The phrase, “I swear to God!” worked well on both Mom and Dad. My parents just didn’t appreciate how unprincipled I could be. For that lie alone, God will probably slam the pearly gates in my face, especially since I’m still proud of the lie. Even today, I feel no guilt, or shame about it. Out bluffing my Dad was an accomplishment. Clearly, Dad had sustained some pressure from the Spanish military, to expeditiously solve the guard hut mystery, and to prove to them that justice had been administered, that the United States respected the Spanish military. He also had believed the guards claim, that kids had had pushed him off the cliff. Dad just didn’t realize that justice had been served, and that the guilty party that been punished, that night. One man’s truth is another man’s lie, but in that situation, the lie and the truth were one, in the same.

During my interrogation, I looked my fine, courageous, and truthful Father dead in the eye, as if to say, ‘I’m being completely honest and I’m deeply

hurt that you would doubt me, so unfairly.’ Dad finally looked away somewhat satisfied of my innocence. Had he known what I’d done, I think that Dad would have been amazed at my skill at lying. My Dad died many years after this silly childhood event, but because he remained so impeccably serious about honesty, I never told him what I’d done. I let the lie stand to his grave. Dad certainly knew about the importance of keeping secrets, but he never understood the truth about lying. I’ve often wondered what Dad would have been like, had he never gone to war.

The magnificent survival tool of deceit, most likely has some amount of genetic basis. There is a type of lying which appears to have a genetic component, known as ‘pseudologia fantastica.’ It’s characterized by a tendency to create outrageous lies, even when there’s no reason or benefit. People with this affliction may even be unable to realize that they are actually lying, ergo some may even be blind to the truth. Perhaps a good example of such a person is Willie Loman in the play *Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller. While I find that condition oddly interesting, I don’t fall into the category of pseudologia fantastica, since my lying is not

unknown to me, and I know exactly what the truth is.

I've seen a couple of documentaries about hidden tribes of Indians, who've never seen a modern human. Recently in a few cases, these tribes have come walking out of the jungle, and anthropologist rush in to quickly learn their primitive language. Shortly thereafter, it becomes clear that these isolated individuals often lie, simply to get what they want. Perchance, they behave very much like selfish children, or politicians, many of whom are often natural born liars.

Even though it is morally wrong to lie, it is clearly an evolutionary advantage to be a skillful liar, as well as a disadvantage, if one is bad at it! After all, evolution is largely about survival of the fittest. Is it not? And everyone knows that a well-placed lie can certainly promote survival, or even the probability of successful genetic propagation, e.g., "Yes Patricia, you are the only woman for me, and I truly love only you. I don't even look at other women." Lie-based sex is extremely common and highly effective at promoting propagation.

Intuitively, I feel that male criminals have more offspring, than non-criminals, partially because of



their enhanced ability to lie, but for other more hormonally related reasons. No doubt, one's upbringing and life experiences can influence one's inclination to lie, but my gut tells me that there are regions of DNA, which influence lying behavior. To tell you the truth, I've caught myself lying in my dreams. Perhaps the clear evolutionary advantage of lying is not a moral issue, but a fundamental biological reality. But if lying is owing to some advantageous dominant set of genes, a dominant allele, which allows the organism to survive and propagate, is it not then one of God's greatest gifts? That is, if there actually is a God. My lying, though probably derived my material Grandpa's DNA, was enjoyable.

On the other hand, possibly it's just one of the extra-large stumbling blocks, which God strategically throws down in our path, then enjoys watching us trip over it, time and time again, as the need to repeatedly lie presents itself. Either way, whether lies are stepping stones of survival, or the stumbling blocks of morality, you're most likely going to choose the one that coincides with your particular needs, and beliefs.

Though it may seem unlikely, pushing the

Spanish marine off the cliff was by no means the end of my interaction with him, and the best of our interactions, were yet to come. Strangely, soon after the surgery on his arm, the guard awkwardly continued with his guarding duties, while he wore a large L-shaped white plaster cast on his arm, so for a few weeks his elbow remain crooked at nearly ninety degrees, with his shoulder locked in place. Therefore, he couldn't possibly have effectively fired his rifle. *You'd think the Spanish marines would give him another assignment.* The guard wouldn't have wanted to take us kids on, with that big cast, and us holding our sharp gigs.

After the night he and his shack went over the cliff, he no doubt knew that we kids were not to be abused, anymore. From then on, he never again mistreated us, whenever we'd walk out onto the fish-trap, or when we'd search the beach for buried artifacts. He'd simply ignored us, and we politely did not rub his nose in it, principally because we didn't want him to suspect us, anymore than he already did. Everyone behaved, as if nothing had happened. After all, he didn't know for certain that it was us, who'd shoved him over the cliff, and it's quite likely, that such an insufferable drunk, has numerous other

enemies.

Most likely, since he'd mentioned that he thought kids had pushed him over the edge, his superiors had ordered him not to bother us. Or maybe, my remark to Dad, about the guard having done something to deserve his being pushed off the cliff, had in some indirect manner made it back to the Spanish authorities. The guard had to be impressed that we had not told on him for shooting at me, or for knocking Luke to the ground, not to mention all the nasty verbal insults he'd levied against our mothers. Unlike him, we kids never uttered a word about his unpleasant deeds to a soul. The closest I came to telling on the guard was when I had speculated about doing so, that night at dinner, when Dad had tried to get me to confess.

Sometimes, while fishing the ancient fish-trap, we'd glance-up toward the guard shack at the top of the cliff and see him gazing down at us. In all likelihood, he was wondering if we were the ones, who'd shoved him off the extra steep slope and broken his arm. Besides the four of us, there were other kids, who occasionally used the fish-trap, and it was likely that he'd been rude to them, as well. So, there was no way he could be sure the four of us had

done him in. At times, I may have felt something similar to remorse for hurting him, but damned if he didn't deserve it, ergo I'm not positive that I actually felt something. That bullet could have easily hit me. Unlike the guard, even when drunk and angry, I would never shoot at an undeserving person, as he'd done. *He's one of those guy, that alcohol turns into a monster.* Nor, have I been obnoxious when drunk. At that time, we kids figured that the guard was an inherently mean person, who'd gotten exactly what he deserved. Some part of him, had to have realized that, yet the guard was about to change, and surprisingly for the good.

One Sunday morning, I was setting-off to leave the base, to go see Anna, and so I was on the lookout for notorious Spanish guard. Having just passed through some woods, I was heading for the perimeter fence, on the side of the base closest to Puerto de Santa Maria. To avoid detection, I generally took various routes, but that day I took a route, I'd never traveled before.

Perhaps, because Anna was on my mind, I was more than slightly distracted, when I started down the steep wet grassy slope. Suddenly, I began to slip, but like a fool, rather than just dropping to my butt

and sliding a bit, I'd decided to run down the slope to avoid getting my pants wet in the soggy grass. In addition, I didn't bother to look at what laid in store at the bottom of the slope. As mentioned, my mind was riveted on Anna. The week before, Anna had described what she wanted me to do to her that day. When I first started to focus-in on the vivid patch of green at the bottom of the slope, at first I thought it was just some short scrubs.

With the corresponding increase in downward momentum, I noticed too late, that the fairly large green patch was literally hundreds of prickly green cactus pads, perfectly situated in my path... dead at the bottom of the slope! Why I hadn't seen it, before I started down the slope, was clearly due to my obsession with Anna. Suddenly, there I was, about to run right smack into the middle of the spiky cactus patch.

The expanse of the prickly patch was perhaps thirty or forty feet to my left and right, so there was no going around it, but it was only about eight feet across. It was right then, that I made my second witless decision, even worse than the first one, where I decided to run down the slope, instead of just sitting down. Rather than dropping to the ground

and sliding shoes-first into the edge of cacti, and maybe get a few sharp painful spines through my canvas-sided tennis shoes, I confidently opted to vault over the eight feet of cacti. It was a world-class moronic decision. Once at the bottom, I affected my best leaping effort, but trying to jump up and out, while going downhill, just doesn't work too well. Still, my vault managed to get the majority of my body over the prickly patch. My upper body and genitals (thank the Lord) cleared the thousands of sharp spines, but most of my legs and feet came down amongst the needle-like spines. Wearing only thin cloth shorts, and canvas tennis shoes without socks, the hundreds of spines went through and sank deep into my flesh.

Unfortunately at times, confidence can be the feeling you have, just before you more fully grasp the situation.

Moe Ray Williams

For a couple seconds, I just laid there with my legs and feet impaled by seemingly countless one to two inch needles. Surprisingly, there was no pain,

and I thought it wasn't going to be too bad. But then, when I tried to move, and so my leg muscles contracted, the pain became excruciating. With the muscles relaxed, the spines were not too painful, but whenever I attempted to free myself from the spines, and even slightly tightened the muscles in my legs to move, the spines assaulted me, with mind-bungling pain. *I can't just lay here, because this place is so isolated, that no one will find me.* Each time I tried to move, and the leg muscles tensed, the pain became stellar. Things quickly worsened, because my legs began to swell, especially my knees and ankles. The pain and pressure of the swelling joints became intolerable. Using just my arms, I dragged my legs and feet out of the spiny green cactus pads, then apparently passed-out.

Awakening, to my surprise, I was laying on my back in my own front yard! The guard, we'd pushed off the cliff, was kneeling over me, pulling the last of the cactus spines from my swollen legs and feet. He'd taken my shoes off, and they were sitting side-by-side on the grass next to me. His plaster cast had been taken off, about three weeks prior. Seeing him caused me to momentarily be paralyzed with fear, but then when he noticed my expression, he slightly squinted,

then smiled, and looked me in the eye, as if to let me know that he knew was my friends and I who'd shoved him over that night. *Wow, he's not pissed at me!* Evidently, while out on patrol, he'd found me and carried me home, nearly a quarter mile hike. *He knows where I live, holy shit!* If he had not found me, I don't know what would have happened to me.

Perchance, I would have died, laying face down next to the cactus patch. My swollen knees were bigger than my thighs and my ankles were as large as my calves, and my feet and toes looked weirdly fat. I tried moving them, worried that I'd again feel the pain of the spines, but since the guard had done a thorough job of extracting them, I found I could move painlessly, though quite stiffly. Before the guard left, he brought the water hose over, handed it to me, turned on the facet and told me to drink, and to run the cool water on my legs and feet. He said that I'd be okay, then stood-up and abruptly walked away, and thankfully, before my Mom came out of the house.

I did as he had instructed, and the cool water did seem to help. Then, I slowly got up and turned off the water, and managed to limp into the house. Mom freaked-out when she saw my legs and feet. With the



spines out, the pain wasn't nearly as bad. By the next day, I was pretty much okay, just very stiff and sore. But still I walked, though poorly, due to the remaining joint swellings. By the day after that, the swelling was down to half, and I could walk much better. One of the worst aspects of the injury was not getting to see Anna, until the following weekend.

When Mom asked what had happened to my legs and feet, I talked about falling in the cactuses, but made no mention of trying to leave the base, nor did I refer to the help from the guard. Reflexively, I lied and said I was out looking for lizards, slipped down the slope into the cactus patch. I would have told them about the guard, but then Dad would have insisted on personally thanking him, which might have been dangerous, since it had been the same guard, whom we'd pushed off the cliff! Also, there was a better than even chance, that Dad had previously questioned the injured guard, the morning after the incident. Later, I found my own way to express my gratitude to my former antagonist.

Our house was next to the last one at the southern most end of the base family housing area, and it was practically adjacent to the woods, which I'd passed through, prior to falling in the cacti. As a

result, once back through the woods, the guard only had to walk past one house when carrying me home, and fortunately had remained unnoticed. If someone had seen the Spanish marine carrying my unconscious body, or his pulling out the spines in my front yard, these could have gotten complicated. Thank goodness Dad wasn't home and Mom was distracted in the house, probably telling Carmen, our maid, what to clean and cook that day.

In those days, Dad was a fairly serious evening drinker, but not in the morning or the afternoon, unless of course, it was the weekend. But after a hard day's work, and before turning in at night, he'd go through about a quarter of a fifth of scotch or bourbon. Lots of drinkers live under the misconception, that if you're able to withhold drinking, until the evening, you're not an alcoholic, but I'm not sure about Dad, since willpower should have been his middle name.

I've got to admit, my Dad was never ever appeared to be the slightest bit sloppy, verbose, or abusive, even after considerable drinking. In fact, it was nearly impossible to tell when he'd been drinking. He just seemed more relaxed, not as angry or frustrated. The maddest he ever got at Mom was

when he simply told her she needed to a calm-down, but he did so with only a firm voice, not loud. And the lord knows there were times when Mom really needed to cool her jets. At times it seemed, her Sicilian blood carried more emotion, than it did red blood cells.

Yet sometimes, I'd think Dad enjoyed Mom most when she was flying off the handle about some insignificant ditty. If she started yelling, he'd lovingly grab her and pull her into the bedroom. She'd later emerge in a good mood. Love is strange in so many ways. My parents were extremely good people, but with old age, they became washed-out pastel images of their younger selves, yet always good to each other. Old age is rarely kind or inspiring. Creative living is a youthful thing. Mom stopped her emotional outbursts, and amazingly Dad gave-up drinking, and managed to do so, as if giving-up the booze was little more than giving-up ice cream. In fact, he stopped booze, smoking, and coffee, all the same day, and never showed the slightest ill effect. Perhaps, by stopping them at the same time, it was actually easier, than quitting them, one at a time. To say the least, my Dad possessed stainless steel resolve.

Mom had a minor hand in Dad's decision to quit alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. She didn't mind his drinking, or his coffee, but she couldn't stand the smell of tobacco, just like her mom. Dad smoked the big three: cigars, cigarettes, and a pipe. The pipe stem had irritated a spot on Dad's lower left gum. So Mom, being the exquisite prevaricator that she is, and knowing that Dad had a dental appointment coming-up soon, went to see Dr. Harvey, our dentist, and family friend. Mom more or less ordered Dr. Harvey to lie, and to convince Dad that the irritated spot on his gum looked like cancer, and so he should stop smoking, or face a painful death.

"Honestly Dr. Harvey, you certainly must realize that the spot on his gum could one day become cancer, and if you don't do something to make an impression on him, and he gets cancer, in a way you're at fault. It's just a small lie, anyway, but it's for the greater good! So, just tell him it's already cancer, and then he'll be more apt to stop smoking, before he really gets it. Call it preventative medicine, Dr. Harvey. Okay? Thanks, doc." Mom so instructed the family dentist.

The dentist bowed to Mom's request, since what Mom had said made sense, even though it might

have been considered medical terror tactics. Dad stopped everything, and all the same day as the dental appointment; after that appointment, no more coffee, tobacco, or booze. Perhaps, Dad didn't stop his habits out of fear of death, for he had no noticeable fear, other than his nightmares. I think he quit his bad habits because he knew there was so much left for him to accomplish in the field of military intelligence.

Concerns over medical liability were considerably different in those days. Today, no dentist in his right mind, would do what Mom had suggested. The flood of frivolous medical lawsuits began occurring a few years, after we'd returned from Spain. Doctors' insurance rates have skyrocketed. Today, most medical and insurance legislation is controlled by lobbyists and the corporate greed of their employers. In fact, most changes to medical legislation are now written in conjunction with doctors employed by lobbying firms... doctors writing their own ticket to greater liability freedom. After all, it sure looks like Purdue-do Pharma controls the *DEA*, *FBI*, and the *FDA*. Just look at the drug addicts Purdue-do has been allowed to create, including Rusty Limp Bough!

Being a regular evening drinker, Dad had bought countless cases of high quality scotch, with a few cases of bourbon, and stacked them all around the house. Many of the closets of our house and most of one bedroom were filed with cases of fine booze. Dad also sold the hooch on the side. The pilots, coming back from Scotland and England, would often have their planes, usually the bombers and the shiny DC-3s, packed with cases of booze, so there was no tax or tariff, and no transportation cost, thanks to Uncle Sam. All that airplane fuel was paid for by the Navy, and the pilots got to log their ever valuable flight hours.

Invariably there was always a pseudo 'military reason' for the flight, as well as for the drive from the runway, to the nearby foreign distillery, using an 'available' military truck. Dad and the other pilots generally managed to secure a big discount, since the booze was purchased in extremely large amounts. In a manner of speaking, the pilots were alcohol distributors. At one point, Dad supplied all the liquor for the base O-club.

The aircrew would land on some 'available' runaway close to the foreign distillery, the truck would be waiting for them, to drive to the distillery,

load up, then return and transfer the cases of booze to the plane. They'd then fly back. Dad got the stuff for about one fourth of what he would have paid back in the States. Many were the times, that Dad would come home, from the base runway, with the family's old blue *Ford* station-wagon packed full of cases of scotch, with a few more cases roped to the luggage rack on top, and covered with an old dark green bedspread. There's a very good chance Dad made a lot of money from the booze. Oft times, a person would come by our house, load-up a couple of cases; money would exchange hands, and they'd drive away. Every now and then, Dad would put a few cases in the station wagon, and drive over to the CO's house. The CO was a very serious customer and an ever determined drunk. He was not the kind of guy, who could drink without his ego swelling to several times its normal size. He used to come to parties at our house, and I'd make his drinks. He was a bit of an ass, at times.

Some people just get carried-away with themselves when they drink, and the base CO transformed into an unsavory sort. He was one of those drunks, who wanted to stay-up all night drinking, but needed an audience, and once soused,

knew that every insignificant thought, which rattled through his fried frontal lobes, was something arcane. That was why I'd first thought about using the guard's rifle to put a bullet through the engine block of the CO's XK150.

Dad also had some kind of trading arrangement with folks, at various places in Western Africa. Again, with a pseudo 'military reason,' Dad would fly there, with a plane load of scotch. He'd trade the booze for precious and semiprecious stones, which came in little black velvet sacs. Dad would then mail the sacs back to someone in the states, I suppose to be sold. I never found-out what happened to the jewels. Mom claims she didn't know about that, when in fact I'd seen her more than once, looking through the sacks of jewels. Like most women, Mom loved jewelry.

Dad had his own set of values, not much different from those he'd learned in the war. During the war, he'd traded a jeep for a 20 mm repeatable gun. Dad was on temporary assignment flying a B-25. He had the gun mounted in the front of his B-25. The mounting of the weapon, had cost Dad three cases of beer, and two fifths of whiskey. He said the 20 mm was highly effective, during low level runs on Japanese shipping.



“Making a run at em, I could really see the effects of the twenty (millimeter gun). The big slugs would send pieces of the ship flying-up into the air. The 50 cal, didn’t due too much. Sometimes, with small ships, I could sink em, using just the twenty, without having to waste a bomb, so I’d save the bombs for the bigger ships, or the deadly picket ships. Only problem with the twenty mike mike is that it fired too slowly, and when it fired it slightly reduced my airspeed. It was mounted right-up under my seat. The mechanic had to use a lot of metal bracing, to keep it from breaking loose.”

That was one of the most extensive comments, concerning war, my Dad ever made. He was never one to discuss war. When I asked Dad what it was like for him at Pearl harbor aboard the battleship Oklahoma, when the Japanese attacked, and the ship had taken four torpedoes, he just replied, “It was loud!” The war made my Dad a very serious man, ergo almost everything he did was carefully calculated for effect.

As stated, I knew that Dad didn’t really know how many cases of booze he’d procured. So one Friday afternoon, while Mom was in the shower and the maid was asleep, I wiped Dad’s fingerprints off a

case of scotch using a pair of garden gloves, and then used the gloves to carry and place the case in the outside attached tool shed, which was part of the roofless enclosed patio. Before closing the shed door, I pulled a big canvas tarp over the scotch, and threw a couple of coiled-up garden hoses on top of the tarp, in case someone happened to look in the shed, but no one did.

Later that night, while my folks were asleep, I again used the garden gloves, to load the expensive case of scotch onto my red *Radio Flyer Wagon*, and being ever alert for the patrolling military police, I headed-off toward the newly constructed guard hut. It was the same wagon, we'd used to haul the pipe and log, which were still buried, and probably still are now. About fifty feet from the shack, I stopped pulling the wagon and for a couple of minutes just looked and listened, afraid that the Shore Patrol might still laying in wait to catch the people, who'd pushed the guard off the cliff, months prior. After hearing and seeing nothing out of the ordinary, I silently carried the heavy case up to the entrance, and gently set it down in the sand right in front of the open door. The guard was snoring, with his feet sticking out of the opening, just like the night we'd

launched him over the edge. On closer inspection, I noticed that the new hut was larger, and apparently heavier. Also, it was a good ten feet further from the edge of the cliff. I'd taped a note, to the top of the case.

*Sorry about your arm... Thank you for helping me with the cactus spines... Don't tell anyone about this whiskey, or we'll both be in trouble. I hope we are friends, now! Please bury this case, and only smuggle one bottle off the base at a time, so you don't get caught! If you get caught, we all get in trouble, so please don't get caught! Never mention how you got this. Burn this note!*

*Your American Friend.*

For safety's sake, I had slowly and carefully printed the note with my left hand and used Mom's yellow rubber cleaning gloves to avoid leaving telltale fingerprints. It would have been great to see the guard's face, when he awoke in the morning to find the peace offering, but I couldn't stay and watch. Dad was an early bird, and he could have had a nightmare. The entire case of expensive scotch was a

huge gift in poverty stricken Spain. It was probably equivalent to six months of the guard's salary. The next afternoon that the guard was supposed to be there, the air was clear and the sky a robin's egg blue. My friends and I were again at the fish-traps. While walking along the ancient Phoenician horseshoe-shaped wall, I kept glancing up toward the top of the cliff, where the guard hut was situated. For over an hour, the guard never appeared, then I heard Scotty.

“What the hell is that lunatic doing, up there?”

Looking atop the cliff, I saw the guard standing at full attention, facing in our direction, with a smile on his face and his mended right arm raised in a perfect salute. *He's saluting me... Jesus! He must have really liked the booze!* That moment felt better than the revenge, the night we had shoved him over the cliff. My friends and I all stared at him in awe.

While my buddies knew about me falling in the cactuses, they didn't know about the guard saving me, and I hadn't told them about the case of scotch, either. If that had ever gotten back to Dad, my ass would have been toast. Standing at attention, I quickly returned his salute. The guard and I both smiled and we began to laugh, then he staggered a

bit. Patently he'd been drinking. *God, I hope he doesn't get caught with the booze!* When my friends asked, what was going on, as always, I just lied.

“I have no idea... guess he's just decided to be nice. You know, my Mom says some people can change. Anyhow, he seems friendly to me. Miracles never cease (Title of a popular 1952 British Film, so people had taken to using the phrase in conversation.)!”

All five of us laughed a rich healing laughter. If only international diplomacy could be that easy. Indeed, it's a rare occurrence that an enemy becomes a friend. It's much more likely for the reverse to occur. While friends can often later make the worst of enemies, rarely does an enemy become your friend. The psychological rebound was amazing; at least, it was for me. All it took was one genuine act of kindness, maybe two. Every day, probably unknown hundreds of thousands of friends fall-out and become bitter enemies, all around the planet. But most likely, only a handful of bitter enemies ever become friends. What does that say about the nature or future of the human race? The guard never got caught with the booze. But for weeks, I did so worry that he would, and that my Dad would find out, and

I'd have been hung out to dry.

“Whenever you are confronted with an  
opponent. Conquer him with love.”

Mahatma Gandhi

OBJ



## BLOWING-UP THE PENGUIN

Spain held plenty of pleasures and fascinations. One of those was that I could purchase exceptionally powerful fireworks for a singularly low price.

Spanish fireworks were like American fireworks on steroids. Then, the most powerful fireworks, which a private citizen in America could purchase were the ‘cherry-bombs’ and the ‘M-80s.’ But in Spain, there was the very powerful “bombidos,” which were many times stronger.

The bombidos were intoxicatingly fierce; better yet, you didn’t need to light a fuse. You’d just threw the bombido, and there’d be one gigantic explosion, with its impact. In America, the only thing that could be thrown and explode were the wimpy pea-sized ‘cracker-balls.’ You may recall that these are tiny flimsy one inch long sac-like devises made of twisted semitransparent tissue paper. A dozen came in a little paper box with a bit of sawdust packing. You’d throw the small flimsy things onto the hard concrete, and they’d emit a barely audible, ‘pop.’ And about ten percent of the time, they failed to detonate. The

Bombidos always worked.

The Spanish bombido was about the size of a small can of V-8 *juice*. You didn't want to be anywhere nearby, when it exploded. Rumor was that they were the equivalent of a third of a stick of dynamite. We kids would throw them in the street at night. On impact, they'd deafen you, while creating an impressive six-foot tall flame, about two feet thick, and afterwards there'd be a black spot, about one foot in diameter left on the asphalt, and the spot wouldn't disappear with the rain. The surface of the asphalt had been slightly burned-away, about a quarter inch deep. Post detonation, a major rolling smoke-cloud would ascend skyward. If there was a piece of gravel in the street, close to where the bombido landed, it might whiz past you much like a bullet! Bombidos were serious business. If a kid had been foolish enough to throw it at someone, and hit them, it would probably killed them.

My God, it was loud; several times louder than any 12 gauge shotgun! If you stood within 40 feet of the bombido, when it detonated, you could feel the shock wave pass through your body, and your ears would ring the rest of the day. Bombidos weren't too much less, than a military-issue hand-grenade. They



have a lot to do with why my daughter now has to constantly repeat things. Going deaf is for hermits! Still, I haven't purchased a hearing-aide. The idea of wearing one haunts me. How I loath the accouterments of old age, especially that last one, the box, though I think I'll opt for cremation!

Ever notice that it's often the blue and green eyed folks with the hearing aides? Perchance, it's because the darker the eye, not only the more pigment on their irises, but the more the pigment on the eight cranial nerves (the auditory nerve), and therefore the longer those nerve cells function, ergo dark eyed people typically are less likely to need hearing aids.

Sometimes as a person ages, the pigment begins to disappear, and the brown-eyed person may have more to spare. Once the pigment is gone on those particular auditory cranial nerves, so goes the hearing, if not some of their sense of balance. And so, brown eyed people may be less susceptible to hearing loss, due to loud noise. Moreover, they may be less likely to need a cane or walker, when they get old, since their sense of balance is also contained in the same pair of pigmented nerves. Although, I've reached these conclusions on empirical observation, these things have been partially studied in dogs. The

pigmentation of the eighth cranial nerve may make some people less bothered by loud sounds.

<http://www.fleetfiretimbers.com/FFT/Articles/Color%20and%20Deafness%20in%20Dogs.htm>

The power of the Spanish bombido, and fact that it didn't require a fuse, to detonate, made it hugely appealing. You'd just throw it at something hard and... BLAM! If you threw the bombido in the street, you had to throw it high, in a long arc. That way, you had more time to run and be farther away, before it came down. If you threw it at a wall, it had better be a long throw, and it was best to have something to hide behind, usually a tree. Normally, we used these bombidos for cheap entertainment. But, there was a time, when I employed a couple of them for a more judicious, though slightly dangerous, purpose.

Once, I used two of them to aid in the administration of justice to someone, who was every bit as bad as the aforementioned Spanish guard, perhaps worse, for he seriously damaged the minds of many young American school children. Now days,

teachers are grilled on how to be politically correct with their students. Back then, the teachers' behavior toward their students wasn't considered to be of great consequence.

All of the teachers in the Navy base school system were Americans, and had been hired in the United States, then flown across the Atlantic to Spain; that is, all except for the school's Spanish teacher, the notorious Señor Ricardo Gomez. He was a native of southern Spain, and a guy, who sincerely hated kids, especially American kids. Like most bigots, he probably hated himself, but he didn't let that interfere with his abusive treatment of his American students.

He often called us 'spoiled brats,' as well as worse names. Señor Gomez was a social and educational nightmare. Perhaps, he'd been taught by the world's meanest Catholic nuns, and so thought it was traditional to denigrate students. Unlike the nuns, he never slapped or hit any of us; nonetheless, he was the master of insults. His face an ever changing mask of disagreeable looks. I don't recall him ever having one friendly expression, certainly not a smile, nor did he ever compliment.

Frequently, he'd be poking at his scalp with a single

fingernail, or a pencil point, and then finally he'd giveaway to more violent scratching. Afterward scratching, he'd use the palm of his hand to smooth his sparse strands of straight greasy black hair back down to his scalp. Head and body lice were extremely common in southern Spain, in those days. The American kids on the base didn't often have such bugs, perhaps because once a week, a big flatbed pickup truck would drive slowly through the base housing areas, spraying giant bellowing white clouds of DDT (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane), from a huge gun-like nozzle. From the back of the spraying gun, a hose went to a pump, and another hose left the pump, to go into a 55 gallon drum of the poison.

There were a half dozen of these drums roped in place on the back of the green military truck. No one knew that DDT was dangerous back then. As kids, we'd all run behind the trucks and breathe it in, and soak our skin and clothes in the billowing white clouds of vitriolic vapor. Our parents had told us it was harmless, as they'd probably had been told by the military... shades of agent orange.

Originally, the DDT was made by Othmar Zeidler in 1874, but it was a Swiss chemist, Paul Muller, who found it killed insects. The poison made its big debut

in WWII to kill mosquitoes in an effort to control malaria and typhus. In 1948, Muller got the Nobel Prize in Medicine for uncovering the fact that DDT was the A-bomb of insecticides. In writing this hodgepodge, these small excerpts of factual information obviously seem so much more important, than does my boring little life.

Much later it was found that DDT caused cancer, reproductive problems, and various other physiological ailments. The poison stays in the body for extend periods, since it's stored in fat cells. Maybe that's why the poison didn't seem to harm me, for at that time, I was thin like as a rail... not a gram of fat, and so perhaps my body was less prone to storing the toxin. On the other hand, the brain is made of about sixty percent fat. Perhaps, this may be why I'm such a poor sleeper. There indeed is a correlation between insomnia and DDT exposure.

[https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/indhealth1963/22/3/22\\_3\\_199/\\_article/-char/ja/](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/indhealth1963/22/3/22_3_199/_article/-char/ja/)

The evil Señor Gomez was a towering five foot two inches tall and built like an emperor penguin,

looking similar to a bowling pin... narrow shoulders, wide hips, with a distended belly. His butt waddled, when he walked. Of course, all of elementary students referred to him as ‘The Penguin.’ (That character was popular in the comics, even back then.) Thinking back, I now realize that he may have had *Klinefelter’s Syndrome*. Victims of the genetic disease have at least one extra x-chromosome, since there are over 1000 genes on the x-chromosome, and many are expressed in the brain, patients with KS have a higher problem with psychiatric conditions, and The Penguin’s psych problem was definitely meanness.

In my unprofessional psychiatric opinion, Señor Gomez was one giant irritating psychiatric-disaster. To top it off, The Penguin perpetually wore a too tight shiny black suit, which had probably never been dry cleaned. He wore a heavily starched white shirt, with frayed cuffs and collar, an old fashioned black string tie with ever swinging silver metal tips, as well as extremely cracked black leather shoes, the toes of which curled up. The shoes looked like something you’d expect to see on a cartoon character. Other Spanish males didn’t dress that way, nor did they act like The Penguin. The vast majority

of the Spanish males were good and honorable men. Please realize that The Penguin was the exception to the rule, and unlike the Spanish guard, he probably remained forever evil.

At least eighty percent of his hair was missing. What was left was long, dyed jet black, slicked straight back, and plastered flat to his slick, perpetually greasy olive colored scalp. These sparse greasy black strands looked almost like thin black stripes, only covering less than a quarter of his somewhat distended lobular cranial dome. Some guys don't know when its time to shave their head. The Penguin had a small patch of a dyed black mustache, identical to Hitler's. He frequently folded his arms across his small chest, as did Hitler, and had the same effeminate carpal gestures, which Hitler displayed in those old black and white Nazi propaganda films. The Penguin had no problem calling students such things as: stupid, idiotic, lazy, spoiled, brainless, dumb, and worthless. Nevertheless, he probably was correct about us being spoiled.

These were most of his favorite over-worked unimaginative English adjectives. He was the complete opposite of the vast majority of the loving Spanish peoples, yet I would sometimes wonder, if

such blatant verbal cruelty might not have been the norm in the Spanish schools. The use of such words were nearly non-existent in American schools. Our American teachers would have been fired straightaway, for using such demeaning terms, but not The Penguin.

Apparently, our school and the base staff were too afraid of political consequences to fire the rude little dictator. He was the only Spaniard working in our school system, and politics played a major role in the survival of the base. To fire an 'educated' Spaniard would be considered a slap in the face of the local Spanish community, and an unsound maneuver. Moreover, The Penguin was the kind of person, who would have raised holy self-righteous hell, if the school had fired him. He'd have gone straight to the Spanish authorities on the base, and have claimed discrimination and foul play.

Most likely, The Penguin had been all sweetness and light during his initial job interview, when in fact, he was nothing but a sinister little prick. An American teacher wouldn't have dared to use the debasing words, which The Penguin happily and regularly inflicted on his students. He not only did this to the male students, but to the more undeserving innocent



shy females, and where his words tended to simply anger the boys, the girls appeared emotionally wounded. The Penguin especially enjoyed his adverse effect on the credulous girls. Hence, I assumed he hated females. If he did have *Klinefelter's Syndrome*, in a way, he was part female himself. A female has two sex chromosomes, two X chromosomes (XX), a male also has two sex chromosomes, but an X (female) and a Y chromosome (male), but a person with Klinefelter's has three sex chromosomes (XXY), female-female-male.

Of all the teachers, only The Penguin could get away with using those barbed destructive words. He was clearly shielded by his apparent diplomatic immunity. It was well known that the base school desperately wanted to be rid of The Penguin, but just couldn't find a safe way to do it. The Spanish admiral's staff would have found out about his firing, and considered it to be a slap in their face. Every student, as well as the faculty, hated the little man, and he hated everyone in return. The Penguin was the living opposite of Mr. Fred Rogers, who starred on the TV show, called *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, who was a caring brilliant man. The Penguin wasn't even marginally hospitable, so the students, the other

educators, and school staff avoided him. And for their avoidance, I imagine had he simply deemed them to be unfriendly. He suffered from something resembling the psych-pathology called, Borderline Personality Disorder.

The Penguin's reputation had somehow found its way to my Dad, probably because of the the kids' parents had begun to get wind of his classroom cruelties, and had called the base CO, and the CO had asked Dad to look into it. One night during dinner, and out of the blue, Dad asked me to tell him about my Spanish teacher, Señor Gomez. So, I explained to Dad how rude and disparaging that weird little Spanish weasel behaved. Sadly, Dad opted to do nothing, and allowed the Penguin to continue with his tyranny.

“Well, he may be a bit rude and unorthodox, but he is the only Spaniard teaching in the base school, and this base can't afford any more trouble with the Spanish military, nor with the nearby community. In Spain, those Catholic teacher nuns are famous for being meaner than the La Guardia de Seville. Seems like I spend half my time putting-out all these ridiculous diplomatic fires, and I sure don't need another one. I'll try to get the school principal to

have another little heart-to-heart with Señor Gomez. Maybe that'll help some, but some things take precedence over getting rid an idiotic teacher. We can't afford a diplomatic incident, right now. The damn Admiral is just too sensitive, and we need this base. We cover and control the entrance to the Med, so you kids will just have to put-up with the man." Dad commented.

The Penguin continued his debasement of very student he laid his beady eyes on. Almost daily, he would make some unfortunate student stand in front of the class, then have them translate some English phrase into Spanish, while he'd loudly correct them in the most demeaning manner, which his vile little brain could conjure-up. How he loved debasing the girls to tears. If the girl cried, he'd call them an 'stupid immature spoiled baby.' To make matters worse, his English was sorely lacking. Each class, he would usually arrive at the classroom, a few minutes late, because he'd sit in the teachers lounge, guzzling free coffee and consuming as many free doughnuts as his bulbous penguin belly could handle, then he'd slowly waddle down the outdoor breezeway to the classroom. Correspondingly, he'd generally leave the class a few minutes early, to head back to the

teachers' lounge.

One afternoon, we were all sitting in our classroom seats, waiting for The Penguin to make his customary late appearance. In he came, and plopped down in his chair. Immediately, he began to angrily scrutinize desk. That central desk drawer was open about six inches. He then looked up from the drawer and glared at the class, then looked back down at the open desk drawer. To the best of my knowledge, no one had touched his precious desk drawer.

Suddenly, using the palms of both his hands, he violently slammed the middle drawer, producing a loud BANG! The sound was so loud and unexpected, that all of the kids jumped. In fact, a couple of girls literally screamed. Their screams produced a small rare smile, indicating that he enjoyed his frightening effect. As The Penguin continued looking at our class, his smile smoothly morphed into a pronounced sneer. Like a dog that's so ugly it's cute, The Penguin was so evil, he looked comical.

“Who is the idiot, who criminal inside my desk? Who open my drawer, here? Who opened my private desk. I not leave my drawer open! Which you stupid people been in my personally desk? You are all big cowards to no speaking-up to me, about who opened

my desk! Admit your stupid guilt! You bad cowards!” The Penguin so queried the class, with his upper lip curled-up, and his right nostril slightly spasming, ergo his well trimmed Hitlerian mustache looked like a jumping black caterpillar.

His angry eyes though wide-open, appeared extremely small and close together; as a result, he looked rat-like, glaring at us like a determined angry terrier. Though he usually had oily olive skin, during that particularly dramatic tirade, his face and top of his exposed cranium, turned a deep shade of scarlet. The Penguin thrived on the cruel power afforded him by being a teacher. We students looked at each other to see if anyone had opened his drawer, giving each other a look as if to say, ‘What the fuck is this asshole taking about.’ To this day, I’m fairly certain no one had touched his precious desk. He had probably just forgotten and left the drawer open, for undoubtedly, he’d been in a hurry to get to the teacher’s lounge for his free coffee and doughnuts. On the other hand, The Penguin was such a sinister jerk, that he may have purposely left the drawer open, to allow him a reason to come back, slam it, and yell at us.

“Someone knows, who was in my personally drawer! Either you say, you stupid little coward, or we will

all sit silent, for all the class, today. Okay?” He threatened. *Sitting silent is better than listening to your dumb ass.*

So, we all sat silently for the entire class, while Señor Gomez sat at his desk, and read a Spanish paperback. Of course, no one was allowed to talk. Occasionally, The Penguin would look-up and give us a menacing glare, bunch-up his Hitlerian mustache, and shake his head, as if he was utterly disgusted, with just the sight of us. Certainly, I was disgusted with the sight of him, but I didn’t dare glare back, it would have generated a lot of in-your-face shouting, and a trip to the principal’s office, and then my Dad would have gone ballistic on me. But to say the least, The Penguin’s dramatic tantrum was motivating; you might say that it had been nothing short of inspirational, soon causing me to inflict bodily harm, upon his oddly shaped person.

Later that afternoon, while we were playing backyard football, Ed Savage, a fellow classmate in The Penguin’s class, questioned me about The Penguin, and his ignominious display. We always played tackle without pads, but since we were all light-weight kids, we didn’t risk any serious injury, just the usual cuts and bruises. As was my Dad, Ed’s

dad was also a former combat pilot.

“Say Joey, wasn’t that fucking amazing, how The Penguin slammed that desk drawer, and started shouting at us, today. Did you see how Jeannie Blair screamed, when he did that shit? It’s like The Penguin really went over the fucking top, and lost it. He’s a full-blown maniac. You think The Penguin left his God damned desk drawer open, just so he could go the fuck off on us like that? Or maybe just so he wouldn’t have to teach? It’s for sure, he hates us. My dad says someone needs to fire the bastard.”

“I’ve got no fucking idea about what’s wrong with The Penguin, but my gut says he did leave the drawer open, just so he could slam that drawer and scare the girls, and to have an excuse to bitch. Plus, he got to sit there and read his novel. There’s no doubt the prick hates us. My Dad says that if they fire The Penguin, political hell breaks loose. The Spanish authorities will go ape shit.” I explained.

“I hate the God-damned bastard, don’t you, Joey?”

“Fuck’n A right, Ed!”

Back then, there was no bad time to use the phase, fuck’n A. Ed and I had learned to curse early in life, as had most Navy brats. Cursing was a part of

camaraderie. Some people think that profanity is for the ignorant, yet combat pilots and their kids were usually anything but ignorant. As kids, how we loved to curse! I still do.

“Everyone hates him, Ed. Probably his fuck’n mother hates him, too. He’s a full fledged genuine asshole.”

Cursing also represented a type of freedom, and was a foolish childish attempt at manhood. Children want to be adults and old folks want to be young again. Maybe, the trick happiness is to live in the moment, and not be concerned about age.

“We sure as hell need to do something, Joey.”

“You know Ed, in class today, look’n at The Penguin sitting there read’n his book, I got this idea, bout how to pay him back.” I commented.

“I’m all for that! What ya got in mind, Joey?”

The idea had come in a flash, as if it was a gift from God. My few good ideas have usually come in a sudden and unexpected manner, and without warning, like a pietistic endowment. In some cases, I may have been working on the problem for months, but the answer itself arrived in a surprising manner, a sudden unrequested insight. It was not as if I sat down and concentrated on methodically solving the



problem.

“It’s a pretty solid idea, Ed, but a wee bit risky.”

“What the fuck, you got in mind, Joey? Let’s hear it.”

After I laid-out the plan, Ed liked it. The next day, I ducked under and made a quick inspection of underside of The Penguin’s desk, just before the students arrived for class. In less than five-seconds, I was able to determine what I needed to know... the distance from the back of the middle drawer to the inside of the back wall of the desk. To carry-out the mission, all I needed were two of the pressure-sensitive bombidos, and two small children’s toy wooden blocks, as well as a partial roll of masking tape: two blocks, two bombidos, and some tape.

With the use of Jose’s motorcycle, I’d gotten the two toy wooden blocks from the base daycare. Using a pair of gardening gloves, so as not to leave fingerprints, I had carefully taped a block to each bombido. The children’s blocks had a colorful number or a letter carved into and painted each of its six sides, and each side was a different color. The following morning, I carried the two improvised devices in my front jacket pockets, and a partial role

of tape, and the gardening gloves in my inside jacket pockets. It was winter, so I wore the jacket all day, without it seeming too odd. Initially, I was filled with worry, since a lot could go wrong with the explosive little plan; particularly, since I didn't have a clear understanding of just how destructive the two bombidos might be in my proposed scheme. I figured that two bombidos would be about the right amount of explosion, but one would have been better. The two would soon prove to be a bit harmful.

Prior to our common Spanish class, Ed and I were in separate classes. We had each asked to be excused from our classes five minutes, before the start of our Spanish class with The Penguin, claiming we needed an emergency bathroom break. We went to an appointed place in the breezeway and watched as The Penguin and his class left the classroom. Ed and I stood, where The Penguin and others wouldn't notice us. With the classroom empty, there would be about two minutes, before the students started to arrive for our class, and hopefully enough time for us to do what was needed.

While Ed stood lookout at the door to The Penguin's empty classroom, I donned my gardening gloves, hurriedly pulled out the middle desk drawer almost

all the way out, slid underneath the desk, and with the tape, carefully and firmly affixed the two wooden blocks with their attached bombidos, to the back of the middle drawer. The two attached devices made it impossible for the drawer to close, without the two bombidos and attached blocks hitting the inside back wall of the desk. Having firmly taped the two explosives in place, I gently repositioned the drawer, in their guide-rails, messed-up the arrangement of the items in the drawer, so it was obvious that someone had genuinely rummaged through it, then left the drawer open about one foot. Lastly, I positioned The Penguin's chair, so that he'd have plenty of room to sit down, and if the spirit so moved him, to slam the middle desk drawer.

If the volatile Penguin slammed the desk drawer, as he'd done before, he'd detonate the two bombidos. As I said, each was supposedly equivalent to a third of a stick of dynamite, ergo two-thirds of a stick of dynamite would be a big bang, indeed. Consequently, I was filled with a measure of trepidation. *Maybe I shouldn't have done this!* After planting the bombs, Ed and I then quickly walked to the school gym, far removed from The Penguin's class room, where I deposited the old gardening gloves and what was left

of the role of masking tape in a tall trash can, far under the used damp paper towels, where they wouldn't be likely found. Still, even if found, there were no prints on them. The cheap garden gloves were made of heavy rough dirty canvas, and unlikely to hold fingerprints.

We then returned to class separately and in such a manner, that the notorious Penguin, who had just left the teacher's lounge, saw us ahead of himself. This gave Ed and I something of an alibi. Ed arrived about four-seconds ahead of me, both of us trying our best to look nonchalant. As I crossed the classroom's threshold, I did so without looking at the open desk drawer. The Penguin was only a ten or twenty steps behind me.

As I entered the room, I did notice a couple of the students staring at the open desk drawer. They were clearly concerned about The Penguin's impending violent reaction to the open desk drawer. As I sat down in my seat, Ed gave me a brief glance, which said that the proverbial horse pucky was about to hit the high speed fan. I was afraid that The Penguin might gently close the drawer and so discover the bombidos, and yet, I was also afraid of the impending explosion, still I took solace in the fact

that I knew Ed would never tell on me, and that no evidence had been left behind, which could point toward me. Opening my textbook, I tried to look unconcerned.

Glancing briefly toward the classroom door, I saw The Penguin standing silently just inside the threshold, turning beet red and glowering hard at his half open desk drawer. *He looks like he's going to explode!* In his cracked black leather shoes with the up-turned toes, he then dramatically strutted across the room, almost goose stepping, while eyeing the class, searching faces for the guilty party. This time, it was blatantly obvious that someone had actually been in his desk! The open desk drawer represented an unabashed effrontery to his supreme dictatorial authority. The black caterpillar mustache was already jumping and my adrenal glands were squirting buckets of adrenaline, while I relaxed my facial muscles to properly execute the bluff. This was true suspense; though scared, I tried to affect an air of innocence.

The Penguin plopped his soft ample rear down into his hard wooden chair, bared his small yellow terrier-like teeth, again curled his upper lip, thereby severely bunching his ugly jet black mustache, and

continued to glower with his beady rat eyes, searching the various faces. *He's looking for the 'guilty stupid coward.'* Then, with that cruel sneer still plastered across his obnoxious face, and with both his little palms firmly placed on the front edge of the middle desk drawer, he violently slammed the drawer with all his Penguin might, just as he'd previously done, but this time with a far different result. I'm sure that the girls, who had screamed the last time, thought they were prepared this time! Every student realized that he was going to slam the drawer, but only Ed and I knew about the two bombidos.

The two thunderous explosions sounded as one, like a sudden thunderbolt crack right in the classroom. The explosion literally deafened everyone. While I had thought myself prepared, the magnitude of the confined detonation, shocked me. With enormous force, the middle desk drawer was blown directly back into The Penguin's palms and soft bulging penguin belly, sending him and his chair over backwards, flat onto the linoleum classroom floor. The middle desk drawer was shattered into a few large pieces. The back of the desk, which faced the class, was blown free of its' framing, and was shoved

off to one side, with two holes and vertical splits, exactly where the two charges had exploded.

A few small wavy orange flames momentarily flickered up, from the underside of the desk top. *The desk is on fire!* The flames then went out, and smoke billowed upward. With the back of the desk mostly blown away, I looked through what was left of the desk and could noticed the bottoms of The Penguin's curly toed shoes, while he laid flat on his back, but still properly positioned in his overturned chair. *Is he dead?* My ears were loudly ringing, but then after a few seconds, I could hear something. It was The Penguin making some strange desperate sucking sounds, then I recalled making those same sounds myself, a couple of times after getting the wind knocked-out of me playing football. The desk drawer had hit him just below his solar plexus, and he was desperately trying to breathe. The trick on breathing, after you've had the wind knocked out of you, is to not try too hard.

The two girls, who'd screamed before, shrieked and ran out of the classroom. Smoke continued rolling out from under the desk top, and the satiating aroma of gunpowder and burning wood filled my nostrils. It was much like the smell I remembered from the day

the bomb had detonated in my Grandparent's backyard. The smell seemed pleasant, so satisfying, and just as that day in Grandpa's backyard, my ears were ringing. I did my best to look totally shocked, which all things considered, was pretty easy. Ed was smiling, so I frowned hard at him, but he didn't look at me, and just kept smiling, so I smiled, too. Besides, it wasn't long and the entire class was smiling and laughing. The Penguin continued laying on his back, making his weird sucking-rasping sound, still trying to catch his breath. Apparently, his diaphragm was spasming. *I should have just used one bombido.* But, I really wasn't too worried about him. *He deserved this.*

Seeing the tyrant laying on his back, but still in his chair, desperately sucking for air, was as good as watching Mom with the snake down her dress, or seeing dead Fritz with the dent in his head, or the guard running around on the moonlit beach holding his broken arm. I learned early that payback was sweet, but best served secretly and violently. Yes, every now and then, violence works. Like the liar gene, the vengeance gene had most likely come from Mom's Sicilian ancestors.

Alerted by the blast and the screaming girls, it wasn't but a few seconds, and two men came



charging into the classroom, Mr. Wilson the science teacher, and Mr. Lamb the history teachers. They stopped and stared at the smoking desk, next they looked up at the six inch layer of smoke covering the ceiling like a thick undulating fog, a gray hovering cloud. Though I'm sure they saw The Penguin lying there and heard him making his sucking sounds, it wasn't for three seconds, that they bothered to go attend to The Penguin still lying flat on his back. *I've got to stop smiling.* The desk fire had put itself out, but was still smoldering, producing a fairly steady stream of blue gray smoke. The Lamb looked completely uncertain about what he was witnessing. The Penguin suddenly began to breath normally, and yelled.

“Help, me!”

The two teachers rushed to his aid, and tried to help him, by grabbing his raised hands and wrists to pull him up. But when they grabbed him, The Penguin screamed that his wrists hurt, so the two teachers instead lifted him by grabbing his chair back and simply righting it. As I later learned from Dad, both The Penguins wrists had been severely sprained, and he had cracked his sternum/breast bone. All his injuries had been caused by desk drawer being

blasted into him. Once For a while, The Penguin just sat there blinking and looking at us, the class. *Maybe he's trying to figure-out who did this to him.* He was an amazingly hilarious sight to behold. His greasy jet black hair, which normally was slicked straight-back, was protruding out in every direction, and he had a more than stunned expression on his weaselly face. With his hair sticking-out in every direction, you could really see how little hair he actually had!

The Penguin's new hairdo made every student suddenly roar-out in laughter, which plainly humiliated The Penguin, and gave him the impression that the entire class had blown-up his desk. The two male teachers smiled and looked down. The Penguin may have thought that not only the entire class had been in on the explosion, but the two teachers. True to form, and grimacing in pain, The Penguin became furious, but didn't say a word, perhaps because the other two teachers were standing there, maybe because of pain, or maybe because he realized he'd completely lost everyone's respect. The Penguin's appearance was so ridiculous, that even the two male teachers began to chuckle out loud, but unlike the students, they did try to restrain their laughter a bit, and kept their faces turned away

from The Penguin.

Happily, none of this spontaneous debasing laughter escaped The Penguin's notice. It was likely, he was utterly convinced that everyone was in on the explosive attack! For once, he seemed uncertain how to proceed. Again, he yelled at the two teachers that his hands and wrists hurt, and stood-up slowly and stepped outside the door to avoid the laughing students. I don't know who called, but the base ambulance soon arrived. Two white uniformed Navy corpsmen gently escorted The Penguin to the ambulance, parked on the grass between the buildings. The Navy's ambulance looked something like a light gray Cadillac funeral hearse. The Penguin was taken to the base hospital. *This is a great day!* No doubt a call was placed to Dad's office about 'the incident.'

The Shore Patrol investigated, yet none too seriously. They SPs interviewed each kid in our class, then the students from The Penguin's other classes. It seemed that the interviewers weren't trying too hard to uncover the guilty party, because after a few interviews, the investigators had gotten the low-down on the malicious nature of The Penguin. No doubt they understood it was an act of revenge, but

no one seemed too concerned about discovering the guilty party. When they interviewed me, they took note of my last name and asked me if my Dad was the XO. After I confirmed their suspicion, they seemed to sit-up straighter. The two SPs referred to the two bombidos, as being a single 'bomb.' *They didn't figure out the explosive I used.* Looking out the window of the interview room, I saw the burned desk being loaded into a pick-up truck. I took the opportunity, to plant a seed, and say that I 'really' hoped it didn't happen again, since whoever do it, might use a bigger bomb the next time. The investigator asked me why I'd said that, and I simply replied that every student and faculty member hated Señor Gomez, and I didn't want him to get hurt worse or killed, but what I was really doing, by saying that, was to better insure that Señor Gomez never returned. I was hoping the SP investigator would encourage The Penguin to leave the base school.

At least the investigator, who spoke with me, didn't seem too concerned about the 'bomb.' His eyes twinkled, when I described what I'd seen, and his cavalier attitude wasn't a put-on designed to entrap me. Without a doubt, the detective's heart wasn't

into questioning a bunch of kids, and after listening to their comments concerning the nature of The Penguin, he wasn't too interested in getting justice for the bigoted Spaniard. Most likely, the principle had also clued-in the Shore Patrol about the notorious Penguin. As I'd expected, that same evening during dinner, Dad brought-up the topic of The Penguin and his exploding desk. Undoubtedly, the investigators had thoroughly briefed him.

“What's this mess about the Spanish teacher being blasted by some kind of bomb planted in his desk? The SPs told me that it happened your class, Joey! Is that right?” Once again, Dad was drilling me with his best narrowed accusatory gaze.

“Yeah Dad, it scared me to death. It was something else! When the desk blew, it blew him over backwards. You wouldn't believe how loud it was. (Then, I remembered that Dad had been at Pearl Harbor on the battleship, the USS Oklahoma, when it took four Japanese torpedoes, and so Dad better knew what 'loud' meant.) Anyway, nobody expected a thing like that to happen. There was all kinds of smoke. The blast and all that smoke was amazing, Dad! My ears are still ringing.”

“Got any idea about who could have done it, Joey;

about who put the bomb in his desk?” Dad continued to grill me. *Dad thinks I might have done it, because of the bomb I made at Grandpas!*

All day long, I knew that ‘who’ question would be coming from Dad. I had sorted through various answers, and then, settled-on a plausible, yet somewhat absurd answer.

“Yeah, Dad! I think it might have been the school principle. Everybody knows they didn’t get along, and we all know that the principal has been wanting to fire The Penguin for a long time. He hates The Penguin. They hate each other. Everyone knows that the principle can’t even stand to even look at Señor Gomez. There’s no way a student would do something that dangerous! It had to have been an adult Dad, and my bet is on the principal.”

“You really believe that, Joey?” Dad asked, relaxing a bit.

“Yeah, Dad! It was the probably principal. A lot of the students believe that, too. *That was a lie.* Of course, the other teachers couldn’t stand him, either. But the principle would have had access to The Penguin’s desk, at any time he wanted, since he’s probably got keys to all the rooms. But, whoever did

it, just did the school a big favor, if The Penguin doesn't come back to work. Any student would have been too afraid to do something like that. I figure it was a hand-grenade, or a stick of dynamite. Besides, how would a student have gotten into the locked school after hours, without a key? And sure as heck, nobody did it during school hours... too many people are around. Someone would have seen him, planting the bomb. Remember, that I've been telling you about how bad The Penguin was, Dad. Remember? (Here, I touched my index finger to the side of my nose, then pointed at the ceiling.) Señor Gomez best leave before something worse happens to him. Next time the principal might actually kill that hateful jerk, and wouldn't that be a diplomatic disaster?" *I'll bet I got Dad's attention, now!*

I threw in that comment about something 'worse' happening to The Penguin, not because I would have done anything more, though I might have, but because I wanted the fear, to get back to The Penguin, and I knew Dad would likely be speaking with him, and so I was hoping that someone might say that for his own safety, he shouldn't return to work at the school. The bombidos were the only play I had. Anything more drastic would have had to have

been done off the base; perchance, at The Penguin's house, which meant I'd have to do a piecemeal tracking of him. Piecemeal tracking, is a way of determining where a person lives without their realizing you're following them, even if they see you.

"It's difficult to imagine that the principal would do such a thing, Joey!" Dad countered.

"Yeah, I know, Dad. But, someone did it, and the principal is probably the one. The principal is kind of dumb Dad, and only a dummy would do something like that. He hates Señor Gomez more than anyone. The principal used to be in the military, and knows how to do stuff like that, Dad. And, like I said, the principal had the keys to the classrooms." *In truth, the principal is an idiot!* While Dad probably wondered if I'd planted the bomb, he never seriously suspected me; at least not then. When he was a few months shy of dying, he once again asked me, if I was the one, who planted the bomb in The Penguin's desk. It was just before he died at age 92. Again, I lied. The truth would have only hurt him. Besides, Dad was the one, who'd taught me keep a secret, and to "...never tell a soul." He was also the one, who preached that it was okay to kill someone, who was making your life miserable.



Obviously, Ed and I never divulged our secret about the bombidos. As mentioned, keeping a secret imbues one with an authentic form of power. I don't mean that knowing secrets about others gives you power. I suppose it could, if you feel the perverse need to control others, as did Adolph Hitler and J. Edgar Hoover. What I do mean is that if you keep a secret, it imparts a personal strength, because it teaches you something about yourself, and forces you to more closely consider your own motives. Learning to keep secrets is especially important, if you're an extrovert.

Blowing-up The Penguin's desk was definitely a moral thing, and so was shoving the guard off the cliff, as was nailing Fritz in the head with the hammer. Now people call such things, criminal acts. It's all a matter of perspective and whether or not you get caught... different pieces of programmed gray matter, analyzing the same thing. Some people think that the best revenge is to not become like your enemy, while others are convinced that you must become like your enemy or worse to secure justice. It's a tough call, but only sometimes. Ultimately, each person decides what's right. As the world becomes more 'civilized,' we lock-up more citizens, while we keep blowing-up innocent people overseas,

in the name of countering terrorism, without even hinting that we're purposely generating more terrorists to allow the war industries, to get richer.

As you've probably guessed, The Penguin elected to not return to our base school. About one week after the desk blew-up, the principal held a meeting in the gym. At the close of that meeting, he made the pseudo solemn announcement, that because of the explosion, it was Mr. Gomez's (The Penguin's) express desire, not to return to the school. At first, all the students and teachers sat silently, then people started to laugh and cheer. The principle smiled, shook his head, and walked away. We all continued to cheer and laugh at the announcement, and it remains a jewel in my aged memory.

Unfortunately, we later found-out that The Penguin went back to teaching Spanish kids at an elementary school in the neighboring town of Puerto. Even though The Penguin was gone from our school, I was angry that he'd been allowed to reign terror upon us, for as long as he had. I was seriously mad at the principal, and most of the other teachers, for making us suffer, under the Penguin's madness. Most of all, I was irritated with my Dad for putting diplomacy over the well being of the base students. He simply didn't

want to risk the US losing a nuclear submarine base at the entrance to the Mediterranean, due to stupid personality issues. After all, I had told Dad exactly what The Penguin was like, and he had done nothing. The Penguin likely became a school administrator in some Spanish school, so that he could make the students and the other faculty more miserable.

One afternoon, a couple weeks later, just after I'd left Anna's, I was on my way to the bullfights, when I spied The Penguin in Puerto. It was in the downtown area. He was standing in front of a small kiosk made of aging vertical pieces of grayed wooden planking, purchasing a pack of cigarettes. Señor Gomez was dressed in the same black shiny suit he had worn, when he'd taught our class. He looked exactly the same, except that both his wrists were still wrapped with dirty white adhesive tape. Nevertheless, he easily opened the pack of cigarettes, and lit one. Other than his wrists, his Hitlerian look, his weirdly shaped body, and his evil personality, he appeared to be perfectly normal.

The minor explosive epiphany had accomplished what the school and the entire base had been politically unable to do... to make the monstrous

little Penguin leave. It's amazing how a small, God given, idea had changed the world for the better. I felt like General Groves ending the war with Japan. Dad greatly admired General Groves, and died believing that the dropping of the two atomic bombs was a true blessing, which is probably true, when considering how many more people would have had to died to defeat Japan, without using the two A-bombs. The Japanese soldiers' code, the Senjinkun military code, specifically forbade retreat or surrender, so it was expected that each soldier and sailor would fight to their death. The two bombs made it eminently clear that the United States had no problem in annihilating them, and largely without injury to the US, by dropping the bombs from the high flying B-29s.

The replacement Spanish teacher was a warm, fairly attractive, and loving young Andalusian woman, whom everyone enjoyed. Her eyes were wide spaced and filled with a genuine tenderness. Like The Penguin, she was Spanish and her English was far from perfect, but unlike Señor Gomez, she loved people. Her first day in class, she begged us not to blow-up her desk. She then laughed, and we all joined in. The new teacher had heard about The

Penguin. We all loved her, and she loved us.





## **THE SOAP JOB**

Even as a young child, I was never much of a sleeper. Having been ordered to go to bed, I'd loath laying in the dark, staring at the ceiling, waiting for my parents to fall asleep. In those early days, I viewed being sent to bed as something of a frustrating incarceration. Most involuntary parts of

the human mind are impervious to things like 'orders,' especially sleep and things which relate to creativity. The small amount of creativity, which I possess, certainly has little to do with this writing, but is in two other realms: deceit and theoretical science, mostly physiology and a smidgeon of physics. I'd wait an appropriate amount of time, to better insure my folks were asleep, then I'd quietly walk down the hall and silently listen. Once I was certain they were asleep, I creep to the liquor cabinet in the living room.

Desperately trying to drift into a slumber, all the while knowing that sleep was yet hours away, was annoying to say the least... frequently, it was a knot in the lower abdominal muscles. This would occasionally occur even after the two fingers of smooth brown liquor. Imagine that you've just had a wonderful night's sleep, gotten-up and drank a couple of cups of coffee, and you're got that wonderful feeling of inspired motivation, of wanting to conquer the world, but then your parents start yelling at you to go to sleep. Many nights, that's how it was for me, when it was 'time to go to bed,' I felt like I'd just taken a hit of speed. Even in old age, right before I go to bed, I get this impulse to do

something, but then I realize that I need to be up early to attend some meeting or meet some business person; ergo, I take my sleeping pill, and I'm off to dreamland... usually. Anything is better than just laying there, 'trying' to go to sleep. Neither of my parents had any trouble sleeping, so when I'd tell them that I just couldn't sleep, their response was to simply command me to sleep.

“Be quiet, and just lay there, and you'll go to sleep, Joey. Just try harder. If you just stop thinking and try to relax, you'll go right to sleep. You'll see. Now, don't make any more noise. Go to sleep!”

Once I was so desperate to go to sleep, that I decided that I would hold my breath, until I passed-out and perhaps thereby fall to sleep. Holding my breath, I had gotten to the point where I was feeling extremely desperate to breathe; but still, I was determined to fight taking a breath. Soon, I became dizzy, and in a semiconscious state involuntarily, I took a deep breath, but by then, it seemed that I was so filled with adrenaline, from what seemed like, nearly dying. Consequently, I didn't sleep for the rest of that night. I noticed that my nasal passages and respiratory passages were easier to breathe through, no doubt owing to the adrenaline. Both my heart and



my mind were racing. In others words, the holding-of-the-breath trick actually jacked me up, into a hyper vigilant state. Years later, I was suffering with a cold and a stuffy nose, and so I did the holding-my-breath thing, and suddenly my nose just opened-up. If I had to guess, I'd say that I'm made to stay awake for twenty-four hours, and then go to sleep for six to eight hours, ergo I'm made for thirty to thirty two hour days. The earth needs to slow its rotation. It's a huge inconvenience, since most of the world's population enjoys the 24 hour rotational speed.

There's several groups of neurons in the middle seam of the brainstem, collectively known as the *raphe* (the French word for seam), and another larger group of nerve cells known as the *reticular activating system (RAS)*. The *raphe* releases a chemical, called 5-hydroxytryptamine (a neurotransmitter) to shut-off/turn-off or inhibit other neurons, and thereby induce sleep, while the later (*the RAS*) principally releases norepinephrine (a neurotransmitter), which produces the awake state, and turns-off the *raphe*. If your *reticular activating system* is disproportionately large, or your *raphe* is disproportionately small, you may be destined to be a poor sleeper, and be condemned to stay awake for longer periods, and therefore be

somewhat socially awkward, in trying to make your circadian rhythm conform with the rotational 24 hour work-a-day world. Hypothetically, your average person sleeps eight hours a day. They may arise at seven a.m., be at work at eight a.m., get off work at five p.m., and go to bed at eleven p.m. Such a person sleeps eight hours and stays awake for sixteen.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/sleep/sleep-needs-get-the-sleep-you-need.htm>

But what if a person's brain is designed to stay awake for thirty hours and sleep for six hours? How would such a person ever be able to comfortably fit into society's typical employment world? Such a person might be deemed undependable, etc. One of my favorite lies to avoid an inconvenient appointment, which someone wishes to impose on me, is to tell them that I'd love to meet with them at that inconvenient time, but that I do volunteer work at a nursing home. I then suggest that we move or delay the proposed meeting. The volunteer work makes me seem caring and humane person, rather than just someone whose sleep rhythm is messed-up, or that I'm a lazy person. There was a brief period

(about one year) in my life, where I slept only 15 to 30 minutes per night, and so I stayed sick a lot. Working long hours and taking a full load in graduate school nearly killed me. Perchance, it was my own stubbornness, which caused me to sustain this stressful schedule, since I really didn't need to work to pay for my graduate school, but I was just determined to earn money. At least, that excuse sounds impressive. Perhaps, I was trying to make-up for too many years wasted. Most likely the *raphe* in my brainstem had been damaged by childhood alcoholism, and so it was unable to adequately inhibit my *reticular activating system*, hence little sleep.

On the other hand, your *reticular activating system* may be so large, that you have an abundance of brain norepinephrine, consequently you're designed to stay awake twenty-four hours, instead of the usual/acceptable sixteen. And perhaps your *raphe* releases only enough 5-hydroxytryptamine to sleep for six hours, instead of the usual eight.

Consequently, at times, you may appear to have an abundance of cerebral activity, and on those nights, when you stayed awake too long to get enough sleep, you might then find it extremely difficult to work the

following day, without expressing certain amount of lethargy. All your fellow employees with normal circadian rhythms may think that at times, you may seem impressively energetic, but at other times, they'd think you indolent. If upon awakening in the morning, the effects of the *raphe* linger, and 5-HT still lingers in the synaptic gaps, then the individual may compensate by drinking coffee, causing the *reticular activating system* to release norepinephrine, causing larger areas of the cerebral cortex to become active. The coffee also causes the person to release a little bit of dopamine, with the corresponding buzz, and caffeine addition. The dopamine is produced and released by an area called the substantia nigra (the black substance, because it's actually a black area in the brain). Instead of caffeine, some people use stronger stimulants {meth, dexedrine, benzedrine, adderall, cocaine, etc.} than caffeine, yet in the brain, they work quite similar to the caffeine, stimulating the same areas, but producing much larger norepinephrine and dopamine release. The release abuse begins is because the more stimulant the individual uses, the better their liver gets at destroying the drugs, so there's less drug available in the blood to go into the brain. In addition, the brain becomes less and less adept at releasing

norepinephrine and dopamine, so the user must use more to not only get the desired high, but soon he or she must use large amounts to get the feeling of normalcy... addiction. Without the drug, their brain runs low on dopamine, hence they feel seriously depressed, sad, anxious, miserable, unmotivated, worthless, etc. Life seems not worth the living.

Society is often inadvertently a little like Adolph Hitler, in that it finds ways to cast-out or reject those who function outside 'the accepted' circadian norms. All my life, I have had to develop tricks to cover for my circadian imbalance, my inability to sleep at proper times. For example, if I call someone to repair something in my house, they may say, "We'll be there bright and early, in the morning, sir." They often say this, filled of goodwill and pride. Yet, knowing that my circadian rhythm is a problem, I know that since I won't be tired till 5 or 6 am, I won't be able to get-up till 10 or 11 am. Not wanting to appear lazy, I'll lie and say something like, "I work from 4 a.m. to 12 noon doing volunteer work, but I can be home by 12:30 to meet you. Is that okay?" That way, I appear to be altruistic, as well as cooperative. What would I do without my lies?

If I told the truth, and said, "I don't get-up till

noon.” The people might likely assume that I’m shiftless. Furthermore, my friends sometimes think its ‘fun’ to call and awaken me at an early hour, when they happen to be acceptably wide awake. But if I were to call them or bang on their door at 3:30 a.m., when I’m wide awake, they’d undoubtedly have a conniption, thinking me rude. Still no amount of kindly explanation, seems to pacify people about my condition. Your normal person thinks that everyone should be like them, and have the same circadian rhythm, as my parents assumed. I’ve heard tell, that in nature, if a member of a troop baboons doesn’t fall asleep, when all the other baboons do, then the other members will attack and kill the out-of-faze baboon. It makes good sense, due to the simple fact that sleep is so terribly important, and if the one ape, with the altered circadian rhythm, keeps all the others from their sleep, said ape would adversely effect the health of the entire troop, so they kill it.

For some reason, my parents thought that everyone had the same eight hour daily sleep rhythm, and that if I’d just try hard enough, that sleep would automatically come. As a result, I’ve always loathed the physiological need for sleep, and at the same time, desirous of it. Since my parents were

outstanding sleepers, it was virtually impossible for them to appreciate my situation, but then, neither one had been a childhood drinker. Probably, childhood drinking had laid waste to the parts of my brainstem which manifest/control sleep, the *raphe*, that group of serotonergic neurons in my brain's tegmentum, and so I've always been something of a circadian outcast.

Dad could fall asleep almost anywhere, but if you woke him, he could be violent, and then his light blue eyes would burn like funeral pyres, fanned by the flames of wars past. During WWII, Dad made the mistake of going on a couple of Pacific Island patrols with the US Marines. And so, Dad had the greatest respect for the jarheads. Those few patrols coupled with flying countless combat missions, and being at Pearl Harbor, had left Dad with a lifetime of nightmares; yet, except for his screaming dreams, Dad slept the sleep of the righteous. He remained taciturn about his dreams, nor did he share much about the war. Dad has forever remained something of a mystery to me.

At night, while my parents slept like the stones under the temple of Hypnos, I slept like the proverbial tree full of owls, with my mind at times

running-on like a disorganized three ring circus, during an earthquake. As a child, laying in bed, I'd envision and design various things. One day, my Jewish commander customer, a natural born teacher, had explained a few things: the basic functioning of a steam engine, gearing, and pulleys. Some of my favorite childhood creations were various versions of pedal-powered submarines, with water inflatable ballast tanks, operated with a hand pump. Much like the one invented in the civil war. Other times, I'd work on designs of weird bicycles with various sizes of wheels; some, you'd pedal while facing backward, using mirrors to see where you were going, with adjustable tract-like framing, so that sometimes you'd pedal sitting-up and other times, while laying-down. There was another design where the rider would pedal with both his legs and arms, sort of a modification of the tandem bike. The arm pedals could move and adjust laterally on an arcing track so the rider could still steer, while still using his or arms as power. The chain could be keep tight with a spring-loaded tensioner. Who knows if any of those things would have worked, but the creative process alone was exciting, and while it effortlessly destroyed my sleep, it also quashed my frustration over having to lay there.



Even as a child of less than three years of age, I would frustratedly lie in bed, till the 'color waves' would begin. 'Color waves' is what I called them, for lack of a term. I used them, like a hypnotic game, to try to bring-on sleep. When my eyes had grown accustomed to the dark bedroom, and I could make-out the forms and shapes, I'd change the dimly lit room to a certain color, usually a dark reddish hue. The dim room looked as if I was looking through red glasses. Then, I'd think of a different color, either blue or green. If I thought of green, a small green area would appear in the center of my reddish visual field, and then the green area would gradually expand, until the entire room was bathed in a greenish hue, and all the red had vanished over a two or three second period of time.

Continuing the game, I'd think of either blue or red, and the process would start over, and repeatedly I'd proceed with this trick, until blessed sleep would at last steal the show. I could only manage those three colors: red, green, and blue. In the later period of the game, right before sleep arrived, as the colors changed and expanded to cover my field there was a corresponding sound, sort of like rushing water, and a slight feeling of warmth and vibration, then a

corresponding drowsiness would ensue. However, the drowsiness didn't always culminate in sleep.

Nevertheless, it did serve to relax me, and reduce my frustration, about having to lay there.

Usually, I could keep the color waves going for hours, and yet as tedious as it sounds, it didn't bore me. Sometimes the colors would become so intense, it was difficult to see things in the darkened bedroom. Whenever the color intensification happened, as mentioned, there'd be a humming/vibration in my head. Playing the color wave game was one way to break the bed's monotony.

Throughout my life, I've asked lots of people about the color wave game, yet I've only found a couple of other folks, who've experienced that same phenomenon. While every now and then, I can still play the color wave game, currently, I utilize a nightly sleeping pill. Even so, I generally only get really good sleep about every third night. Thank goodness for modern medicine and my good doctor.

As a child, if the weather permitted, I liked to find some dark spot outside to sit, sip the my whiskey and relax. Sometimes, I'd have a small walk-about the neighborhood. As mentioned, in Spain I had to keep an eye out for the cruising Shore Patrol, but since

they kept their headlights on and their car engine always announced their proximity, ergo they never caught me. Occasionally, I'd walk the beach at night, always watching for the patrolling Spanish guard. I was afraid to climb the base perimeter fence, and venture into the neighboring Spanish town of Puerto at night, since I was so young, I would have stood-out at late hours, and if I got caught off the base, Dad's belt would have murdered my butt.

By sheer coincidence, one night while I was enjoying a rather large drink on the back patio, I saw my friend Scotty climbing out the bedroom window of his house. Having drunk a little more than usual, I was half in the bag. Emptying the glass, I hid it in a bush. We were both shocked to see the other at that late hour, yet happy to have the company.

"You drinking, Joey? I can smell the booze on you."

*Oh shit.* "Yeah, just a sip to help me sleep."

"I sneak a little booze now and then, too. Where do you wanna go?" Scotty asked.

"I don't care. Let's just walk around. You do this a lot, Scotty?"

"Fuck yeah, man! How about you, Joey?"

“Lots of times... How often do you drink?” I asked.

“Every night, but I’ve got to wait for my stupid sister, and my parents to fall asleep. Sure as hell my sister would tell on me.”

Scotty was also a childhood drinker, but unlike me, he’d started drinking much later than I, when he was age six, at his Dad’s parties; whereas, I had started by being weened off the baby bottle onto the beer can, around three to six months of age. Scotty was the only childhood alcoholic, I’ve ever known, who readily admitted it. A few times, he’d come over to my house to drink, if my folks were gone, or I’d go to his house to imbibe, when his parents and sister were gone. Both our parents had unlimited stores of booze. We were both noctivagant kids, probably owing to alcohol-induced chronic insomnia. Neither Scotty nor I would drink to get drunk, just enough to be comfortable. Scotty and his sister were child entrepreneurs. For the grand price of twenty five cents, you could go to his house, when his parents weren’t home, gulp down one shot of booze, and for about ten seconds gaze at the fully naked body of his eleven year old sister. Even though I was twelve and seeing Anna the Spanish prostitute, I still found Scotty’s sister intriguing.

Although Scotty and I were serious drinkers, we were good students with sterling reputations; not because we were well behaved, but because we were careful and hadn't gotten caught for bad stuff we'd done. However, all that was about to change, at least for me.

That night that we'd each climbed-out our windows, we were both drunk, and began to walk and talk without any planned destination. By wandering happenstance, we ended up at the base school. As mentioned, except for the new female Spanish teacher, the school was taught and run entirely by American civilians brought over from the States. The majority of the base teachers were horribly untalented, and had no honest love for teaching, so frequently I wondered how they had gotten their job. I imagined the employment ad in the state-side newspapers probably reading something like...

*Looking for a few highly unqualified teachers to instruct in small school, located on a navy base in scenic southern Spain. No desire to teach required. Poor communications skills considered a plus. References and experience not required.*

The white school buildings were typically not what one might think of as being used for a school. The concrete block classrooms were constructed end to end, forming four long block one story buildings, with ten classrooms in each row, with flat roofs. Everything was painted white. There were no closed hallways, just open breezeways, which also had flat roofs held-up by steel poles. Every classroom had one entire wall, made entirely out of large glass windowpanes, in steel frames. Some of the classrooms looked-out over the athletic field, and far beyond that field was a giant wheat field with an old abandoned runway in the middle of it. Back then, one of Rota's jet fighter squadrons had decided to attempt to put together their own flying exhibition team, somewhat like the Navy's famous *Blue Angels*. They used the old swept winged F-8 supersonic jets. That aircraft was nicknamed, 'The Crusader.'

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vought\\_F-8\\_Crusader#mediaviewer/File:F-8E\\_VMF-212\\_CVA-34\\_1965\\_\(cropped\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vought_F-8_Crusader#mediaviewer/File:F-8E_VMF-212_CVA-34_1965_(cropped).jpg)

Sitting in class one day, I could see that one of the jets was practicing for what would be their first

air show. The plane made a couple of long low passes right down the length of the abandoned runway. The jet was ripping along, only thirty or forty feet off the deck. Upon reaching the end of the runway, it climbed upward and momentarily disappear into the distant clouds. Once again, it came down from the clouds, and arrived low over at one the runway. This time the plane was only twenty feet above the concrete deck. Rocketing down the length of the abandoned strip, the pilot rolled the jet, so that he was flying upside down, belly to the sky and canopy to earth. All the kids in the classroom were excited, watching the planes high speed pass. Even the teacher had stopped talking to watch.

“That pilot is certainly going fast, low to the ground, and inverted!” Exclaimed our female history teacher.

One second after her comment, the pilot made the simplest and briefest of mistakes. Instead of pulling up into the sky, the jet disintegrated into the unforgiving concrete runway. For a tiny fraction of a second, he'd pulled back on the stick, instead of pushing it forward. The plane and the pilot were instantly transformed into a streak of brilliant flame about five hundred yards long. *Jesus! He probably*

*didn't have time to realize he was going to die. He's just gone... incinerated! A part of the tail section broke free, and went cartwheeling off to the side, tumbling and vaulting across the wheat field. The tail is more alive than the pilot. At least he didn't suffer... probably didn't get scared.*

That night, when Scotty and I arrived at the school, we found that one of the bathrooms was unlocked, and we went in, to take a leak. While standing at the urinals, Scotty suggested an intriguing notion.

“You know what we could do with those bars of soap, over there on those sinks, don't ya?” He asked.

“Soap the school windows?” I instinctively answered.

“Yeah, but we could write on the classroom windows exactly what we really think about each of our crappy teachers. Write it out with the bars of soap, but write it in reverse so the students and teachers can read it, when they're sitting inside the classrooms, tomorrow. Let's be real creative, Joey. We can tell'm exactly how we feel about the teachers!”

Scotty's use of the phrase “real creative,” chiefly meant, employing various four letter words.



Nevertheless, it was a chance to be candid, without reprisal, and since one entire wall of each classroom was nothing but glass windows, there was plenty of space to write, and be ‘real creative.’ There was no such thing as security cameras in those days.

“God, that’s a great idea, Scotty! What made you think of that?”

“Who knows, Joey? I’m just fucking brilliant!”

“You’re obviously a fucking genius, man!” I responded, and we laughed, and grabbed the bars of soap.

“Fuck’n-A right, Joey!” He responded as we headed out to soap the windows of our respective classrooms.

Since I was fairly drunk, the idea seemed sublime... an actual opportunity to express myself, to vent on those, who needed it. The male children of combat pilots tended to have massive egos, and arrogance was the expected norm. Nonetheless, Scotty was truly bright, and indeed was a genius. We solemnly swore each other to secrecy. After we’d finished, I had managed to scribble and demean only two people, one mean teacher, and the other was the obtuse school principal, who had allowed us to suffer under

the cruel rule of The Penguin for a miserably long time.

However, Scotty was more prolific, and managed to thoroughly pummel five incompetent teachers. Since I've never been a skilled writer, and hated writing, I simply relied more on crude blunt criticism, to communicate my deepest feelings about each of the two undesirable educators. Scotty did the same but with more flourishes of colorful four letter words. The curse words were one problem with our soapy dissertations, and the other problem was that we had actually told the truth, and nothing hits home quite like the truth, especially with the four letter words thrown-in. Contrary to *John 8:32*, the truth doesn't always set you free; often, the truth merely pisses people off, and so the messenger gets injured or killed. In the business of real life, it frequently pays to lie, or just say nothing, but if you must tell the raw truth, it's usually best to do it anonymously; much as I've done in this wholly fictitious book... no truth can be found in these books.

Though many of Scotty's remarks were vulgar, his comments patently hit the mark. The one blundering moody teacher, whom I wrote to, sounded just like a little girl, whenever he'd become

angry, and he tended to become angry far too often, largely owing to the fact that he was a worthless teacher and hated kids. The teaching job frustrated him. He'd get mad if a student didn't understand, as if his poor instruction, were somehow the student's fault. Whenever some student got under his skin, his normally masculine voice would climb two or three octaves. The first time, I heard him do that, it sounded utterly unnatural, almost like another person had invaded his body, a female child. The first time I heard him go off like that, I actually thought he was acting, or was just playing around. When I realized that he was earnestly angry, I thought that he'd gone insane. His anger and his corresponding girly-like voice freaked me out. Looking back, I think he was probably gay, but in those days, I didn't imagine such a possibility.

So when soaping his windows, I simply pointed-out that he was known as, the 'bad tempered crazy girly-man.' It wasn't so much his irritating voice, which was the real problem, but his frequent unnecessary uncontrollable outbursts of rage, simply because he wasn't a decent teacher and some student didn't understand. The irritating voice just made him more insufferable. Possibly these teachers were fairly

normal people, just a little quirky, yet we students were accustomed to moms and dads, who were stable bright caring people. My parents and the parents of most of my friends were amazingly intelligent people in so many ways. Moreover, they were the people, who by hard work and putting their very lives on the line, had helped save the earth from the likes of Adolf Hitler and Hideki Tojo; whereas, most of our teachers would be doing good to save themselves from themselves.

As expected, the next day at school, the investigators of the Shore Patrol were there, busily photographing Scotty's and my literary masterpieces. This was then the third Shore Patrol investigation I'd help to initiate: the first was the guard getting pushed off the cliff, the second was The Penguin getting blown-up, and then, the soaping of the school's windows. The entire school was abuzz, about who could have soaped the windows, and written those 'horrible' things about the teachers, and the principle. The pressure was on the Shore Patrol to catch the perpetrator, since neither the guard getting shoved off the cliff, nor the mystery of The Penguin's exploding desk, had ever been solved. Certain of the teachers and the principle were furious about the

writings, but others were smiling.

Scotty's and my words were not washed from the classroom windows for two solid days, until the Shore Patrol investigators were certain, they had a dependable batch of negatives and fully developed photographs. Dad informed me of that, at dinner that first one night. A couple of windows were rephotographed, the second day. There was no digital photography, back then. Consequently, the teachers and the principal, who had been lambasted by the soaping, were forced to endure the scribbled insults for two solid days! *Two whole days... this is fuck'n great!* Scotty and I were indeed proud of our soapy literary achievement.

As commented, we'd painstakingly printed our words in reverse, so that they could be read from inside the classrooms. The students read them with a great deal of interest, as well as mammoth amounts of laughter. Consequently, chaos reigned that first morning. To add a bit of subterfuge, Scotty and I had also written on the windows of a few teachers, whom neither of us knew. We paid those teachers compliments, based on what we'd heard about them. At the end of the second day of classes, the janitors began washing-off our soapy words with a hose and

big sponges. My last class of the second day, was with Mr. Notre, the aforementioned perpetually fuming girlie-voiced English teacher. He loved saying, 'knowledge is power.' Because it was Mr. Note's favorite phrase, I still hate that phrase. He was probably a gay man, who didn't accept his own sexuality, hence he was frustrated and easy to anger.

His frequent use of the phrase made me think that he assumed all children were interested in power, probably because Mr. Notre lacked any semblance of genuine power, himself. His repeated fits of rage had cost him any chance at respect. Later in life, I'd find that knowledge was not true power. True power is born of love. I suppose one of the finest examples 'power by intimidation' is the rule of Kim Jong-un, the leader of North Korea. It's absolutely ridiculous how the poor and abused people 'worship' that dictator. The North Korean peasants put on the world's most farcical, and overly theatrical performances, when required to be in his presence. How he could possibly enjoy such phony nonsense is beyond me. It's like telling a stupid person he is brilliant. Only a stupid person would be able to actually believe such nonsense. There is no way, he or anyone else, could possibly think that the peoples'

behavior toward him is genuine, yet the he allows such idiocy to continue. While many leaders crave such false displays of adoration, that which is doted upon Jong-un is beyond absurd. It reminds me of many of the African dictators.

That third morning, when the soaped windows were being cleaned, Mr. Notre split our eardrums, by happily announcing to the class, in his glass-shattering girly voice, that the mystery window soaper had been caught. I was shocked, wrongly assuming he must have meant Scotty. *How could Scotty have gotten caught? He sure wouldn't confess!*

“Who was it?” Several students excitedly asked the teacher in unison, while I tried to look only mildly interested. *Oh, Shit!*

“It was Jason V. Stevens! {The middle initial was for Victor, but all the students all said the ‘V’ was for Vicious, his nickname.} That boy is finally going to get everything he deserves. I always knew he did that window soaping. He couldn’t fool me. *You’re the fool Notre!* I don’t think that’s any surprise, considering everything he’s already done in the past. He’s a bad seed if there ever was one.” Girly-man loudly proclaimed, with a smile on his face.

*What’s going on? Jason didn’t do it! I figured the*

teacher's statement to be a bluff, some kind of ploy designed to somehow catch Scotty and me!

Jason was a twelve year old, and an inherently evil kid, who had always been getting into trouble, a natural born troublemaker, and undoubtedly, there was a ton of bad things, which he'd never been caught for; so in a way, I was actually glad he had been wrongly accused. Jason had a long history of bullying smaller kids, stealing their lunch money, as well as stealing things: candy at the movie theater, a camera from the base exchange, a switchblade from a souvenir store, a sailor's uniform cap from the mess-hall, a teacher's gold tipped fountain pen, and no doubt countless other items, no one knew about. If it wasn't bolted down... He also had destroyed one little kid's bicycle, who had nothing to steal. In a fit of rage, Jason had stomped on, and bent and broken, the wheel spokes, then threatened the little boy with a severe ass-beating, if he told anyone. Of course, the kid told on Jason, anyway. Still, I was surprised by the erroneous announcement, that Jason was the notorious window soaper, still I didn't care if he got suspended for a month; in fact, the idea seemed exquisitely just.

But then something unexpectedly transpired. The



girlie-man teacher, continued with his ecstatic declaration, to include some seriously distressing news, which laid waste to my peace of mind.

“Yeah, it’s going to be the end of Jason here, in Spain.” Mr. Notre declared, while clearly enjoying his announcement.

“What do you mean... ‘the end’?” I asked.

“Jason and his whole family are gonna be sent back to the States. His father will lose his job, and sent back, in disgrace. The family will be sent back, and with no job, so heaven help them. All because of that disturbed juvenile delinquent, Jason! The parents are supposedly good people, but they should have done a better job raising that insufferable kid. This foolish window soaping is absolutely the last straw, and now, his whole family will suffer. I, for one, won’t be missing him!” He trumpeted.

“Even so, I hope Jason’s dad can find a job, when they get stateside. Because of Jason’s reckless irresponsible doings, the whole family will probably be financially ruined, and may end-up on the street. You see class, what can happen when you miss behave, and don’t listen to your teachers? The principal has the Steven’s family in his office right

now, giving them the bad news.” Mr. Notre merrily expressed this at hundred and twenty decibels, and three octaves above middle C, while he stood bolt upright, weirdly raising up and down on his toes.

*He’s creepy as hell!*

But for once, what Mr. Notre had said made an impression on me. By soaping the windows, I’d inadvertently incriminated an innocent person, and in the process destroyed his whole family! At first, I thought this announcement might have been a pretense, to see if it could elicit a reaction, and thereby uncover and catch, the guilty party; so I waited a few minutes, while pretending that I was unconcerned about the bleak announcement. Then, I matter-of-factly asked Mr. Notre if I could be excused to use the restroom. Once outside, I hurried past the bathroom and positioned myself in a breezeway, where I could stealthily peer into the principal’s office, while I pretended to be tying my shoe laces, in case someone came around the corner.

Sure enough, there in the principal’s office sat Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, with their scandalous son, Jason. All three of them were solemnly sitting in front of the principal. The mother looked worse than devastated, nor was the father looking too happy. As

expected, Jason was just sitting there looking irate, no doubt angry, for having been falsely accused. The principal's back was to the windows, onto which I'd transcribed my, far less than commentary, message. *I can't believe this shit!*

Instead of this situation making me feel depressed or guilty for what I'd done to the Stevens family, uncharacteristically I became furious. *How the hell did they pin this on Jason?* I knew Jason would have strongly denied doing the soaping, and obviously they didn't have any proof that he'd done it. Jason was just not one to fess-up to anything, much less to something he hadn't done. It was clear from watching the proceedings in the principal's office, that the girly-man teacher had been telling the truth. The whole family was in the process of getting the shaft.

Later, I'd find out that the shore patrol had found Jason walking around, late that night, near the school. That fact, together with Jason's history was evidently enough circumstantial evidence to pin the window soaping on him. A few months prior, I'd meant Jason's mom and dad, shopping at the base exchange, and they were nothing like their evil son. They were friendly, and I had just ruined their lives!

There was even a good possibility, that his parents believed Jason was guilty.

Obviously, the school principal and the shore patrol needed to find someone to pin it on, especially since no one had been punished for the explosive Penguin incident. The vacuous principal had plainly decided to use Jason as his scapegoat. No doubt, the principal and the shore patrol had spoken with the CO's office, or my Dad, and in lieu of Jason's history, the commanding officer, or my Dad, had ordered that the whole family be sent back stateside. One of the things that I had inscribed on the principal's window was a simple question, followed by a two word answer. It wasn't that clever, but it made a valid point.

*“Question: How does the dumbest person in the school become the principal? Answer: Dumb luck.”*

Feeling trapped and frustrated, I became reckless, and marched into the principal's office, storming passed the protests of his secretary. Once in his inner sanctum, I walked around the end of his desk, and stood facing him from three feet away. My hatred was borderline violent. The principal swiveled

his chair to face me, with a surprised questioning look on his face. He just narrowed his gaze, then questioning rapidly blinked, and waited for me to speak. He hadn't a clue why I was there. To my left, on the opposite side of the principal's desk sat the completely stunned Jason, and his obviously markedly depressed parents. They too just stared blinking. At that moment, I felt absolutely no regret for my vandalism, and was only aware of my rage, ergo I screamed at the principal.

“Do you remember those soapy words on your windows?” I said this pointing at the window behind him.

The principal didn't answer, but just gaped at me, and nodded. I waited a two count and continued.

“About you being the dumbest person in the school? Well, you've just proven it true. You see, you've pinned the deed on an innocent person, just so you can save face. (Then, I was pointing at Jason.) You've got the Navy ready to destroy his whole damn family! Jesus, how rude of you. You're a fucking moron! You're about to ruin their lives.” I pointed toward the three of them, took a big breath and launched into my eloquent finale.

“Jason is innocent. Aren’t you, Jason?” I asked, and Jason nodded his head, affirming his blamelessness.

“You see, I know you’ve framed Jason, because I’m the guy who wrote all that stupid shit on the windows. Jesus, I can’t believe I have to tell on myself, because of your God damn stupidity! You were really going to destroy his family, and ruin his father’s job, rather than admit that you couldn’t figure-out who did it. What an asshole you are! So, you’ve now caught me, just because you’re an idiot! I’ve been trapped by a damned nincompoop (one of my Grandma’s favorite words). Fuck it... man!”

After I’d spilled my guts, I was out of gas. I hadn’t planned what to do next. No one spoke or moved; not the principal, not Jason, nor his mom or dad. I had expected someone to at least yell at me. It seemed odd that no one said anything. They all just sat blinking and acting as if I was going to continue talking, but there was nothing more to be said. It was like I was in suspended animation, but my words were a pyrrhic victory, indeed. *I’m really screwed, now. Dad’s gonna kill me!*

After telling-off the principal, I should have just walked home, but lacking a follow-up plan to my

angry confession, I shrugged and ambled back to my classroom, and sat down at my desk. No one had tried to stop me. After a few minutes, the principle stuck his head in the classroom, and solemnly spoke to the teacher.

“I need to see young Joey, right now. Send him, out here, please.”

“Okay.” Girlie-man answered.

At that time, I had no desire to listen to anything the principal had to say, but strangely enough, he didn't utter a word; other than to tell me to follow him, and I did. I knew it wouldn't be long and I'd have to face the painful music, and Dad would be the conductor. The moronic principal silently walked me down the breezeway to his office. *He's got to realize what a fool he is.* When we got into his secretary's office, he told me to sit and pointed at a chair. The secretary angrily glared at me, but only for as long as it took me to glare back. She didn't look at me anymore, but instead, showed her distain by shaking her head. She was a blindly loyal servant to the moronic principal.

The principle returned to his inner sanctum, having said nothing to me, other than to tell me to sit

in his outer office. *Maybe I won't have to go to school, anymore! Great!* I just sat in the chair and wondered what would happen, next. Since this was the first offense for which I'd been caught, I was hoping that the school would be lenient, but like I said, I was only fearing my Dad. As it turned-out, the school did nothing to me, but everyone found-out about my soaping the windows. Worst of all, I'd grievously damaged Dad's well deserved pristine reputation, and I always regretted having done that. Moreover, that soaping of the windows permanently changed my relationship with Dad.

After about an hour, Dad showed up, and silently drove me home. Needless to say, I knew what was coming. He questioned me why I'd done it, and I just shrugged and said I didn't know why. Of course, I never mentioned Scotty's involvement in the window soaping. Then insightfully, he again questioned me, if I'd put the bomb in the Penguin's desk. I lied. At least. he didn't again mention the guard shack going off the cliff.

It turned-out to be the worst whipping, ever. Dad whipped me so long and hard that his doubled-over black belt snapped in two. When the whipping finally stopped, I turned to look at Dad and he was



breathing hard, and examining his broken belt. The whipping was not as bad as you might think, because after some number of licks, I didn't really feel the rest. It was like my butt went numb half way through the whipping. At first, I cried, but by the time the belt broke, I transformed into being steaming vexed, yet I wasn't angry at Dad; he obviously was doing the right thing; I was fuming about the twist of fate, which life had dealt me, and I was angry with myself, as well as the principal.

It was not possible to hate a man like my Dad. He truly is the finest human I have ever known. Unhappy and embarrassed that he'd found-out, I was feeling stupid for not considering the fact that the principle would pin it on someone innocent. Still, that was no excuse for my behavior. Certainly not the fact that I was drunk that night. The real punishment was not the wiping, but the permanent change in my Dad's attitude toward me. That dramatic change continued, until he died. In China there is the something called, 'face.' 'Face' is a group of behaviors and social/cultural customs, dealing with factors like integrity, morality, and honor. It often has a lot to do with one's public image, and for my dear Dad, 'face' was everything.

Sleep didn't come that night, and with all the students looking at me the next day, it was hard to get through my classes. Girlie-man didn't know what to say to me, so he said nothing. Still, I felt no real shame, but I did feel a great loss. Dad more or less ditched me. He still financially supported me, but barely ever spoke to me, after that, and never trusted me. We had lots of silent dinners. From then on, he never had much to say to me. In fact, he died never again trusting me. My soaping the school windows, broke it for Dad... broke it for good.

That foolish failure of mine changed my life forever, because Dad had always been my moral (what little I had) compass, my touch stone; so then, I was then set adrift. It was sort of like there was no longer any point in trying to be good; since it was too late for redemption, so I just slowly coasted further downhill. From then on, I gave-up wanting to be anything. This, together with the four years of post-withdrawal depression, ended any desire to make something of myself, other than not being depressed. The idea of a god life had become just spending time, without misery.

“Your soaping of the school's windows as broke it for you and me, Joey! That's it!” Dad proclaimed.

*Christ, he means it! He never lies!*

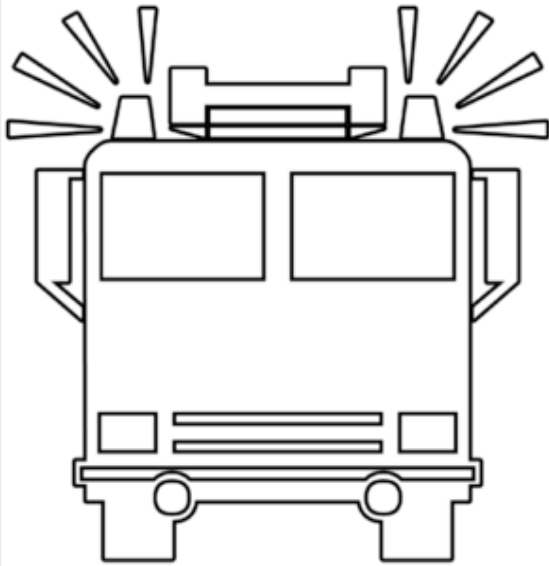
My Dad was never one to make an idyl claim or threat. His word was his bond, and so those words cut deep. We never spoke of my soaping the school's windows, again. That very same day, I gave-up on trying to impress him. There was no point. In my Dad's eyes, I remained an excommunicated failure, till he died, for maybe just a couple of days before he died. While that is largely true, I'm okay with it. From that day forward, Dad would never compliment me, but only mention those things which I did wrong or failed at. Not one compliment ever passed my Dad's lips, for in front of the entire base, I had gravely humiliated him. From then on, to the end of his life, I never received a hug, a handshake, and certainly not a 'well done.' There were only two minor exceptions to that statement.

Many years later, I graduated with a Ph.D. and a post-doc, and Dad never so much as said, 'good job.' After that whipping, I'd given-up thinking of myself as being a decent person, and slowly gravitated to crime. Dad had labeled me as 'bad,' and so I grew worse; at least up until my forties. This is not to say, it was my dad's fault for it wasn't; the fault is all mine. I knew there was no getting back into his good

graces, and in my mind, my Dad was my only judge. No one else's opinion mattered, and after watching Grandpa, the law certainly didn't matter. So, then unmoored from any semblance of a bellwether, I aimlessly drifted with the darker currents of life. Truth was something I only pretended to respect. Conceivably, even 'absolute truth' often may have different interpretations, for there is no absolute, except perhaps in a few aspects of physics, but even then, there are often exceptions, partially because physics doesn't understand the entirety of the universe. Another reason there are no absolutes is owing to the fact that no one's gray matter is the same as another, and it's only three pounds.

As ridiculous as it may sound, getting caught for soaping the school windows was my first big disaster, and one from which, psychologically, I'd never fully recuperate. At the time, I was twelve, but even at my current age of sixty-five, just thinking about that day in the principal's office can still make me relive the anger and frustration, as well as the subsequent marked depression at my loss of my Father. Long I've endured the death of my father's respect, and will regret it, until I die.

001



## **BURNING BOREDOM**

Once in a double blue moon (The next is scheduled for 2048, and if alive, I'll be 100 years old.), I've experienced that quirky unforeseen circumstance, where it seems that almost everyone on the planet knows about a particular fact, but of which, I have remained clueless. It might be knowing how to spell

a relatively simple word, or some obvious historical fact. Perchance, the most notable such circumstance of ignorance was my being unaware of a fairly common piece of information, where since, I've asked myself, *'How is it that everyone knows about this, but I didn't?'* Possibly the reason I didn't know about the *KKK* and their notorious cross burnings, whippings, lynchings, and other forms of intimidation and cruelty, was that I'd been out of the country for years, or perhaps it was because I'd mostly lived in other parts of the United States, where the klan wasn't highly active. Nevertheless, I had been born in the klan heartland of Mobile, Alabama, and even today, it remains an area of strong klan support. Still, I only visited Mobile for two weeks each summer, but not those summers, when I was out of the country. Perchance, the reason I didn't know about the infamous *KKK* was simply a matter of serendipitous timing. Still, it's a bit like living in Nazi Germany and not knowing about the holocaust. Of the fifty states, the klan supporting states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee, all are in the lower ten for average IQ. The hatred those Klan sympathetic regions clearly display, may also be owing to the fact that klan supporting states tend to

have poor educational systems, and seem to display residual anger about losing the civil war, ergo they tend to have a greater number of people who apparently enjoy hating, etc.

<https://www.inc.com/bill-murphy-jr/we-compared-average-iq-score-in-all-50-states-results-are-eye-opening.html>

Just a few days ago, the *Sons of Confederate Veterans* (SCV) went before the Supreme Court arguing for the right to stick a Confederate flag on vanity license plates in Texas. How insulting to all black people! It's like saying that slavery should be supported! Just why would someone in 2015 want a Confederate flag on their license plate, knowing that it is a clear symbol of slavery and bigotry? Too many folks here in Mobile suffer such thinking; perhaps this has a genetic basis. Again. There are brilliant residents of Mobile, yet there does seem to be an inordinate number of the left side of the curve. Likewise, there are no doubt brilliant men, who are racially prejudice, but there do seem to be fewer bright guys in the klan per capita, when compared with the country as a whole. Nevertheless, there are brilliant

bigots, but those I've meant plainly seemed to enjoy hating. Hating seemed to really get their juices flowing. Hate doesn't know just one level of intellect.

Granted, I knew there were many men, who were racially prejudice, and had been angry with my Grandpa for setting black murderers free, but not till later, did I realize that they belonged to an organization called the *Ku Klux Klan*. While I realized that white people in the South, were often bigoted, and did evil things to black people, I'd never heard of the actual organization called the KKK. When my friends told me about them, I recall thinking that even the name, *Ku Klux Klan*, sounded too weird to be real, as were the horrible deeds my friends told the klan had committed. At the time, I never thought such an organization could exist in the United States. While I'd heard of racist lynchings, whippings, and such, I had not the actually realized that they had been carried out by an actual all white institution, with a name. I'd assumed that those atrocities had been carried-out by individuals, or small groups of hate-filled guys.

My realization about the klan began one day, when I was barely fourteen, in my sophomore year in high school. Jeff and Bill, my two best friends, and I



were just sitting around, when they mentioned something about the *Ku Klux Klan*, three strange sounding little words, which somewhat rhymed because of their first letter. *How did they come-up with such a weird name?* ‘Kuklus’ is an old greek word meaning circle, and perchance that is where the name came from; meaning a circle of brothers or a klan. But if that is true, then the name *Ku Klux Klan* itself may be a bit of a redundancy. Correspondingly, I’ve heard that the klan originally stood in a circle, during their early meetings. *Mensa International* is also a group of people, who have incorporated the circle idea into their name, where the members come together as equals... no head of the table. As you probably know the group is only for the intellectually talented. I’ve been told that in Latin the word ‘Mensa’ means a round table, where no one has precedence over another (no head of the table), since each member is considered to be cognitively brilliant.

This relationship of words may be the only place where these two dramatically differing groups find juxtaposition; still, when it comes to gray matter and behavior, there are few solid absolutes. I’ve frequently wondered if there’s much overlap of

membership between the two groups. It's hard to imagine a *Mensa* member, who is also a *KKK* member.

For me, it seems difficult to imagine that a highly intelligent individual would join the *KKK*, though I'm fairly certain there are such people. As mentioned, hate and prejudice are certainly not confined to one type of brain, nor is it limited to one particular region of IQ. In fact, I'm almost positive that I've known one man, who was a member of *Mensa*, yet who vocally supported the klan. After all, there also have been a few highly intelligent serial killers. Notice that I'm not giving you any additional detail about said individual, for the last person I want angry at me is a bigoted hate-filled genius. Like my Grandma, he is generous and kind to his family, and white friends.

Furthermore, my aforementioned nazi uncle, the brain surgeon, was a brilliant man, who also thought Hitler was a great man, but there again, my uncle could be cruel and plainly loved to hate. Occasionally, a mind with an awe-inspiring group of hate-generating neurons can contiguously possess a savvy pair of brilliant frontal lobes. Sad to say, such problematic pairings, though relatively uncommon,

do woefully exist; just consider Hitler's Allgemeine Schutzstaffel, the part of the SS responsible for enforcing Hitler's radical racial policies. Those men were often brilliant guys, who did licentious things, which the word 'hate' doesn't begin to adequately cover.

Of the twelve trials, which formed the Nuremberg Military Tribunals, the ninth trial is where important members of the infamous death squads of the SS were tried. The 24 defendants were all officers and all faced charges of mass murder, for orchestrating one of the world's bloodiest harvest of death. And as mentioned, my dear Dad was there, as a man only in his late twenties, playing some unknown role, which he refused to ever divulge to Mom, or me. I've always wondered about what Dad had witnessed and participated in while there, especially since the vast majority of those twenty-four members of the SS were justly hanged.

Shocked at my ignorance concerning the predominately southern organization, known as the KKK, my two childhood confidants began to describe things they'd heard about the white-robed bigots: whippings, burning of black owned homes and fields, lynchings, burying of bodies, their hooded uniforms,

illegal procurements of land and property, forced closures of black-owned businesses, etc. They described how the klan members were not just black haters, but also were bigoted against: Jews, Latinos, and in many cases Asians. *How have I missed this KKK thing, with all my visits to Alabama?* My all white friends continued to tell me that many whites and blacks alike, lived in fear of the klan and the klan's infamous cross burnings.

When I asked why whites would fear the KKK, my friends said that the KKK didn't care for anyone, who objected to their racist opinions, and had been known to kill people, who were friendly with, or sympathized with, African-Americans or Jews. That's an awful lot of people, since very few of the folks, who I've known, agree with the views of the klan. This is not too different from how certain religious groups perceive each other, today; their religion is the only 'true' religion. Bill told me that over ninety-nine percent of the white people despised the klan. While neither my friends, nor I, were racially prejudice, we did love the idea of mischief and scaring people witless. As foolish kids, we didn't begin to remotely appreciate the graver cultural, moral, and historic implications of those horrible

cross burnings. Perhaps my immorality had left me less concerned with things of moral substance, and more interested in excitement. Since I'd fallen out of favor with my Dad, I'd even given-up trying to get good grades in school.

I'd gone from being a straight A student, to being content with a C average. At the time, we were living in San Diego and there weren't any black people living in our area... nothing but white folks for miles around. The massive influx of destitute Mexican people hadn't yet begun. The drug lords and crooked politicians had yet to take control of their country. Though I didn't realize it at the time, the klan also tend to hate Mexicans. So back then, I thought that if we burned a cross, and did manage to scare anyone, it would only be lots of local whites. What we were about to do was obviously foolish, but we were desperate to escape boredom.

"Maybe we could make our own cross and burn it, to scare the bejesus out of the neighborhood. After all, this is a super boring day." Bill suggested.

"That would be a blast, and really get things stirred up. It'll scare the living shit out of people! We haven't got much else to do, today. We could make it now, but we'll have to wait till dark, to torch it off."

Jeff agreed.

“Not that it matters, but after what you’ve told me about the klan and the *FBI* investigating them, there could be some kind of federal law against our burning a cross, and there might even be some kind of an investigation, if we burn it.” I proposed. *That’s what Grandpa would say.*

“Who cares? We won’t get caught. We sure as hell won’t talk. Besides, there aren’t any black people around here, and probably no stupid *KKK* members, so it’s really not going to do anything, but shake up some paranoid white people.” Jeff commented.

“Okay, let’s do it. Where do you want to burn it? We’ll need some place where a lot of folks can see the flames. And, we’ve got to find the wood to make the cross.” I volunteered.

It was then that we all remembered, that it just so happened there were several old white wooden posts, which had been used for county stop signs. Minus their red octagonal metal signs, discarded by a San Diego County highway crew, in the nearby woods, half way between Chula Vista and the city of San Diego. The heavy posts were perfect for what we needed. Before we went to get them, we first stopped

by my house to pick-up a few things: a hatchet, which we sharpened on my Dad's bench grinder, a hammer, and some long galvanized nine inch nails, as well as a few handfuls of thin two inch finishing nails. Jeff went by his house and grabbed a big arm-load of old threadbare towels, which his dad and brothers normally used to wash and dry their cars. In addition, we took a small shovel, a half full five gallon can of gasoline and a round metal one gallon can filled with terribly smelly greasy diesel fuel. Diesel wasn't low sulfur back then, so it smelled worse than death.

Once in the woods, we found and selected two of the weighty wooden posts and took turns using the hatchet to notch them, so that they'd bite together at right angles in their centers, forming the center intersection for the two pieces of the cross. It turned-out to be a huge cross. The vertical post was about ten feet, and the horizontal post we'd shortened to be about eight feet. Those posts were extremely heavy and durable, like ironwood, so they were not easy to work with. The hatch was also useful in cutting countless deep gashes into the wood, so that the fuels would better soak-in. What we thought would be an easy job proved difficult, but at least we were no

longer bored, with nothing to do.

To firmly affix the two posts of the cross together, we hammered in several of the larger nails into the front and back of the juncture. With the hammer, we bent-over the protruding points of the nine inch nails. Next, we completely wrapped the cross in the raggedy old torn-up towels, then used dozens of the thin two inch finishing nails to drive through the terrycloth and into the wood, bending the thin nails over, to crimp the towels tightly to the wood, thereby covering the entire surface of the cross in a thick layer of tightly wrapped terrycloth. Thus, we more or less mummified the giant cross, so it could absorb and hold more fuel.

Once we'd finished our unholy creation, we hid it, along with the fuel cans and the shovel, in the woods near an elementary school, next to an intersection where lots of cars traveled. Jeff and I had dragged the weighty cross by its two arms, while Bill carried the two fuel cans. If Jesus had carried a cross, as heavy as ours, he had to have been an extremely powerful man, especially after surviving that legendary Roman flogging. Once we'd hidden the cross, the two cans of fuel, and the shovel in the underbrush, we returned the hammer and hatchet to



my Dad's tool room, and waited for the cover of darkness to carry-out our plan. While waiting, we all became concerned about the process of igniting the cross. Soaked with three and a half gallons of highly volatile fuel, lighting the monster could result in one of us getting seriously burned. We had to come up with a safe means to set it on fire. We also had the problem of erecting the cross. We wanted to burn it close to a major road, so that as many passing motorists might see it, as possible. The problem with putting the cross next to the road was digging the necessary hole, without being seen by the passing motorists, who might remember us, and later ID us to the police or *FBI*.

It was Jeff's clever idea that we forgo digging the hole and simply prop-up the heavy ten foot cross, against the huge well built heavy metal school sign, which stood next to a major road. The sturdy all metal sign faced a major highway with plenty of traffic. What we didn't imagine was that the burning wooden cross would actually destroy the metal school sign. We wrongly thought the fire would just cover it with black soot, which could later be washed-off.

After the three of us had finished dinner, we each

made an excuse to our respective parents, about studying at someone's house, and then we met-up in the woods by the cross. Once the sky was black, and there was a momentary pause in the traffic, we dragged the heavy cross out of the woods and laid it down at the foot of the metal school sign, which read *Wilton Elementary School*. We then went back into the woods, to await another break in the traffic. Running back out the second time, we doused the massive cross with the diesel fuel and gasoline, then we lifted it, propping it up against the middle of the heavy-duty metal school sign. Raising the heavy crucifix took all the strength we had, and resulted in our hands and arms getting soaked with putrid fuel mixture. As a result, we were afraid to strike a match. There stood the cross in the dark, vaguely visible from the road, but we feared lighting it. Searching around behind the school, we hurriedly found a water facet, which we used to rinse the smelly fuel from our hands and arms. We then spied a torn t-shirt, which some kid had left on the outdoor basketball court, and we used it to further wipe and dry with. This delay in the lighting of the cross may have been helpful, allowing the fuels to further soak into the wood.

Returning to the cross, it was around eight o'clock. Our solution to lighting the cross was simple. We merely trickled some fuel in a skinny six foot line, leading away from the base of the cross. Bill then struck the match and lit the small trail of fuel, as he moved back a couple of steps. The tiny trail of fuel quickly burned. The flames leaped-up onto the cross. The ignition of the cross was nearly explosive. The sudden light and heat were tremendous and shocking, creating a colossal "fummp" sound, and for an instant, there was the brilliant illusion that Bill was totally enveloped in the flames. We all were mesmerized by the radiant power of the burning fuel. Then, it dawned on us that we were in full-view of the roadway. Luckily, at that moment few people drove passed. The three of us ran into the woods with the fuel cans, to hide inside some underbrush, gazing out at our towering inferno. The flames were massive, extending upwards almost forty feet into the black night sky. Colossal gray and black clouds of bellowing smoke were rolling-up, ascending into the heavens, illuminated by the lively towering yellow and orange flames. Light from the fire was so brilliant that lit the underside of the cumulus clouds, making them glow with a pinkish orange hue. After a bit, it became difficult to tell where the smoke from

the cross left-off and the glowing cloud layer started. Hiding in the woods, we continued to gaze at the giant blazing holy torch, as it lit the night sky. Needless to say, the inferno was far more than we'd anticipated.

Within a few minutes, a couple hundred cars had stopped and were haphazardly parked in the field in front of the school, as well as all along both sides of the road. *Holy Shit! We're in deep shit!* People stood next to their cars, or just stared out through their car windows, at the blazing crucifix and its massive fumes and bellowing dark smoke. The inferno had infect produced a gathering. Other cars slowed as they drove by, and still more, pulled off the road to gape. The enormous conflagration illuminated the entire front of the school, and eerily the flames brightened the fronts of the houses on the other side of the highway, as well the fire gave the underside of the clouds a pinkish orange glow. The residents of those houses stood outside on their porches, and in their front yards, starring at the fiercely burning cross and the candescent cloud cover. The people appeared entranced. You'd have thought a UFO had landed. *The wood must be treated with something which burns, maybe creosote.* In the dark, the light produced

by the blazing cross was like a minor sun. I wondered what Jesus would have had to say about racists using his cross as their symbol?

“Way to go you *KKK* guys! Thanks for using my cross as your burning symbol. I just love the fact that you lynch and whip all those evil black people. You guys are a lot like me. We all love to hate and punish. Don’t we? I was sos stupid when I decided to make that black race. What was I thinking? Thanks for handling my mistake you good and just *KKK* guys. What would I do without you guys?” So sayth the Lord.

None of the spectators were moving or speaking; they all just stood still, leering at the flames and smoke. A casually dressed gray haired fellow got out of one of the cars, and from various locations and angles, started popping flashbulb photographs of the fiery cross. *This burning cross is like a big tourist attraction.* More and more people continued to pull off the road, gazing at the burning crucifix. Though the three of us were well hidden in the thick brush of the woods, we slowly took handfuls of dirt and rubbed it on our faces, so the bright flames might be less likely to reveal our guilty white faces.

The cross was a symbol of salvation and heaven,

while the flames are the essence of hell, ergo it dawned on me that the *KKK* had adopted something of an oxymoronic symbol, both heaven and hell, good and evil all in one symbol. It was sort of like the yin and yang symbol of Christianity. Of course, I probably didn't know the meaning of the word 'oxymoron' at fourteen, but the concept was still there, and it seemed both profound and rather childish. The klan's symbol was the burning of, what was for many, the ultimate symbol of goodness and hope, the opportunity for an eternal life. Contradictorily, the klan claimed to be christian. Most groups, regardless of how radical, claim that their God is the only God, and said God is on their side; therefore, they're clearly 'fighting' for righteousness, even when they're just committing cowardly atrocities. It's amazing the degree to which some folks rationalize their heinous misdeeds. If there is a God, He's or She's got to be tired of being so abused and misrepresented. From what my friends had told me about the klan's dealings, such a symbolic abuse made sense.

The burning of the cross may have been started by a Scottish writer, Sir Walter Scott. Around 1810, Scott had written a poem, *The Lady of the Lake*, in

which crosses were set on fire on hilltops to summon the surrounding Scottish clans. That poem is far from being a significant literary accomplishment, and it's something of a rather boring story. Scott was supposedly of Irish and Scottish ancestry, and his work was said to have been quite popular in the southern United States.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/  
The\\_Lady\\_of\\_the\\_Lake\\_\(poem\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lady_of_the_Lake_(poem))

Later (1905) an American author, Thomas Dixon, made reference to “The Fiery Cross of Old Scotland’s hills!” in his book entitled, *The Clansman*. That book was part of a trilogy and tried to make the klan appear heroic. The 20th-century revival of the *KKK* may be a direct result of Dixon’s glorification of them. Perhaps, merely because of these two coincident minor literary facts, the morose and sinister klan tradition of cross burning became tradition, that and the fact that a burning cross was cheap and easy. If those things are true, it was an unimpressive historical beginning. Cross burning was used by other groups, long before the *KKK* started their cruel and murderous ways. Every group needs their symbols, rituals, and trappings, anything to

make them seem more significant. Look at any religion: the sermons, songs, prayers, symbols, etc.

Many of the rednecks in Mobile have told me the *KKK* did not burn crosses, until after Dixon's book had been published. Every belief has to have its 'required' historical lore. Lore provides the illusion of credence, generating conviction in the followers. The simple reason is that, with added lore, more memories and ideas become associated with a practiced piece of neurology, and the more it interconnects with the person's identity and their other ideas and beliefs, so the more 'real' it seems to be, and the harder it becomes for them to refute... Brain Washing 101. The longer an institution lasts the more lore and rituals it accumulates, and the more mysteriously complex it becomes; just look at the Catholic church, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Scientology, etc. Each religion is replete with stories of heroic deeds by their followers, acting with the blessing of their God or Gods.

After the giant cross had burned for about twenty minutes, the police arrived on the scene, to keep the people back, who by then numbered more than five hundred. The giant cross was still burning brightly, when the fire department showed-up to finally



extinguish the blaze. The firetruck itself wasn't used to put it out, just two men approached, each with a large CO2 fire extinguisher, and in seconds, the white fog of the two extinguishers had choked-out the flames, still the thick smoke bellowed skyward. With the flames extinguished, and in the many car lights, we then clearly saw that the metal school sign, upon which we had propped the cross, was severely bent, as if it had slightly melted. Worse yet, the paint on its front had been burned away, from the extreme heat; in short, the expensive sign was totally ruined and was soon replaced. With fire-proof gloves, the firemen pushed over what was left of the charred and blackened cross. Later a pick-up truck pulled-up, and the three firemen loaded the remains of the cross. Through-out all of this, the three of us stayed hidden in the undergrowth.

The three of us were pretty stunned, and needless to say somewhat frightened. We all felt like we'd bitten-off more than we could chew. The blackened demolished school sign became a major concern, especially with the police and the firemen, standing only fifty yards away from our hide. We had not anticipated the size of the blaze, nor the magnitude of the damage to the expensive school

sign, and certainly not the enormity of the public's response. *Holy shit, I wish we hadn't done this!* Without making a sound, we just laid there for about an hour, until everyone had driven-off, and the people across the street had gone back in their homes.

Temporarily, we carried and left the fuel cans and shovel deeper into the woods, then hiked to a car wash to get rid of the stench of the diesel fuel and gasoline. Later, walking home soaking wet, with the retrieved fuel cans and the unused shovel, we repeatedly swore each other to eternal secrecy. More than fifty-one years later, I've now broken that pledge.

The next morning, I was eating breakfast with my parents. As usual, Dad was reading the morning paper. He was gazing at the front page, inadvertently leaving the local section face-up on the kitchen table. I glanced at the front of the local section, and there was a four by six inch photo of the burning cross, accompanied by a two column story! All the black and white photo was able to capture was the white glare of the burning cross, surrounded by a black background. Nothing else was visible, except I could vaguely make out a hazy bit of the front of the school. *Thank God it's a bad photo!* When my folks

weren't looking, I grabbed the local section folded it open and back, so as to hide the photo. During this maneuver, I noticed the small subtitle, "Has the Klan come to San Diego?"

*I sure hope Jeff and Bill don't say anything!* After breakfast, I covertly took the local section to my room. The newspaper article firmly hung the burning of the cross on the klan, and never speculated that it might have been kids. This conclusion had been partially reached, due to the 'professional job' done in making the cross. Evidently, someone had inspected the burned cross. *Wonder if the FBI is going to investigate? Holy crap!* The article went on to say that, since the burning of the cross had occurred directly in front of a school, it may have been meant to say that the klan intended to reeducate people about school integration. The issue of school integration was highly controversial, then. There was also a line about Jewish community leaders being concerned. *We didn't consider the Jews.* My political correctness was nonexistent. It had only been one week prior that the *Ole Miss riot* or *Battle of Oxford*, was fought between Southern segregationists and the federal and state agencies/forces. The segregationists were protesting the enrollment of James Meredith, a

black military veteran, at the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, Mississippi. Two people were killed during the night's riot, including a French journalist, yet roughly 300 people had been injured, and there I was as a child foolishly stirring the pot, burning a cross in California.

Thank goodness, Dad didn't care about the paper's local section. Neither of my parents noticed the little story about the neighborhood burning cross. What amazed me was the size of the response to the trivial burning of two pieces of wood, and a bunch of old raggedy towels, by three bored non-bigoted white kids. My two friends and I remained true to our vows of secrecy. We should never had done the deed, for there are things in life which are just too tragic to joke about: slavery, the holocaust, cancer, rape, murder, a purposeful lack of curative medicines, corporations destroying the earth's environment, poverty, starvation, unjust killings in the name of war and fighting terrorists, etc.

OBJ



## THE STRIPPER AND THE ORANGUTAN

*Sorry to say, the following imaginary story might be too sexually explicit and crude for some readers; nevertheless, it is as it supposedly happened, when I was barely fifteen years old. Because of the raw nature of this chapter, I'm afraid that certain of you may abandon further reading, and so for that reason, perhaps I should have omitted it from these books. If you do have delicate sensitivities, when it comes to things like uncensored sex, the unwarranted killing of innocent animals, and murder, you may want to save this chapter for last, or skip it all together. But please, don't abandon further reading, since some of the later chapters, in these books, may have a smidgen of social and scientific value. Through the years, I have changed in my perspectives, and can now better appreciate those of you, who may find this chapter offensive. While the following is unsophisticated, it was a genuine piece of Americana, which most likely no longer exists, and probably for the best. On the other hand, everything in these books is fictional.*

Back in 1963, Phillip was my best friend and his grandfather, Eli Cedillas was an old-fashioned poor tobacco-chewing country farmer, who bathed in a

pond, then rinsed-off with water from his hand pump, but only on Saturdays, and never in the winter. Eli had literally been born in a barn in 1889 on January 15th, supposedly the same day that *Coca-cola* had been born, when the soda contained addictive cocaine. Eli could recall drinking the cocaine-laced colas, and used to say they made him feel, 'real peppy.' When the drink first came-out, it was called the 'temperance drink,' and marketed as something of a health giving medicine. Not too different from *Purdudu Pharma* claiming that their powerful pain killers were nonaddicting. Originally, the coke formula contained two stimulants: the cocaine containing coca leaves, and caffeine from kola nuts. The two stimulant compounds produced a synergist effect... a real buzz.

Eli's mother, who'd been born in the middle of the civil war, gave birth to Eli, but soon became ill with pneumonia, so she couldn't nurse the boy, and she died a two weeks later. The story goes that periodically Eli's father would hold the hungry infant, Eli, underneath a small dairy goat, where he suckled his nourishment. The raw goat's milk must have been nutritious, since Eli grew-up to become a remarkably strong and healthy old bird, with the

appropriate nickname of, 'Goat.'

Goat's four hundred acre farm mostly grew corn and mustard greens, with a small two acre field of onions. The old farmer also raised chickens and hogs for his protein. Once, I watched Eli eat a large raw white onion, as one might normally eat an apple. When Eli slaughtered a huge hog, I was astounded at how fast and indifferently he performed the bloody task, while never stopping his commentary about fighting the Germans in WWI, and the various miseries of trench warfare. He made it sound like the boredom, the mud, the rats, and the various diseases the men contracted were far worse than the actual fighting. All the while, he matter-of-factly butchered the animal, as a mechanic might disassemble an engine, but instead of wiping grease from his fingers, he would periodically flick-away blood. Then Goat changed the topic to the depression, and how the banks had closed their doors, foreclosed on all outstanding loans, and 'flat-out' kept everyone's money. That comment reminded me of what the old Jewish Navy commander had told me in Spain, while he'd sort through the coins, I brought to sell him.

"Everyone just went broke for a whole bunch of years, after the God damn banks plum stole all



everyone's money! They jest slammed them doors and dat was dat. Hard-work'n folk just went penniless, with hardly not'n to eat. Thank God I'm a farmer and a hunter, and know how to cut and chop wood to cook and keep warm. Lots ah city folk just plum died. Plenty just killed themselves. If'n families couldn't pay the power bill, they'd just freeze. Plenty ah kids died with pneumonia. The bankers are nothing but out-n-out thieves. No God fearing man owns a bank... controlling other folks money. You bet your ass, I hide my money... not about to let no man keep my money for me! That's just plum stupid." *Goat really likes to use the word, 'plum.'*

One Saturday morning, right after breakfast, Dad had ordered me to wash the family car. Having just finished, I was hanging the towels on the old white plastic clothesline, when my friend Phillip hurriedly dropped-by, with an idea.

"My pop said I can use the car to go hunting at my Grandpa Goat's farm, Joey. You want'a grab your rifle and some ammo, and go shoot'n with me?" He asked.

"Sure! What'a we gonna shoot there?" I asked.

"Groundhogs! Bring that old enfield of yours. It's too

powerful for groundhogs, and it'll mess em up, but we're not eat'n them, anyway. Groundhog meat tastes bad and is only good if you're starving. At least, that's what Goat says." He smiled.

"Way cool, man! Let me go ask my Dad, grab my rifle, and some ammo. Need some gas money, man?" I responded.

"Always, man." He said, as he headed back home to pack his gear.

The idea of hunting greatly appealed to me, especially since I was desperately bored, and was tired of doing chores around the house. Never had I been groundhog hunting, but you would have thought that Philip had said we were going to hunt tigers, on an expensive jungle safari in India. Sadly, I must admit there is a part of my imperfect psyche, which enjoys killing. Back then, I'm not even sure I even knew what a groundhog looked like. The hunting instinct is a bit of a double edged sword. To some degree, the inclination to kill is simply man's primitive desire to survive: to kill animals to eat, to kill your enemy, to kill defending your: ancestral gene pool, mate, friends, etc. Countless number of times, throughout human history, the instinct has been nothing short of a vital necessity. But while

killing is a useful and natural reaction, if not an actual desire, it is not one which you want to pay too much homage to, lest it become more like a hunger. That hunger isn't in me, not any more, but it could have been, if Anna hadn't come along. Being with Anna had markedly lessened my delight in hunting and killing. This was also evidenced by my not attending as many bullfights. It may be that way for a lot of guys, though many probably don't care to admit it. Some people, both male and female, become rather disagreeable, without a sexual outlet.

Yet, because of my own darker urges, and the fact that I've killed far too many animals, if not a few humans, I can easily spot that primitive hunger in others. Growing up as a young man, occasionally that hunger might have gently licked my worthless soul, but I almost never fell prey to it, at least not that I care to often recall. There were a couple of gloomy nights in Mexico City, when that instinct may have found its outlet.

Subjective observations have caused me to think, that the vast majority of regular hunters enjoy killing animals. Few are the hunters, who only hunt for the art of tracking and stalking the game, or the accuracy and distance of their shot, or to experience the

beauty of the outdoors, or for the value or favor of the meat. Those things are indeed part of the desire to hunt, but for most (not all) hunters, I'd say that the thrill of the kill is seventy to ninety-nine percent of the motive behind hunting. Maybe I'm just projecting, but suffice it to say, that the totality of the human spirit isn't pure sweetness and light. But in all honesty, I believe that the desire to kill is a totally normal piece of gray matter, as long as it's not too big a piece. Why else would so many people watch action movies and horror films filled with violence. Why else would so many Americans go along with wars with weak justifications? Why did so many Germans follow a man like Hitler? Many people are born with that dangerously lethal tangle of neurons.

This is not to say, I could enjoy killing a domesticated animal... I probably wouldn't. True, I did like killing Fritz the cat, but only because the animal had attacked and wounded me, and I had temporally lived in fear of the creature. In addition, I didn't enjoy the fact that the kid shot the skinny old horse in the dry Spanish countryside, next to the little abandoned house. But, the killing of a dangerous enemy might not be too difficult, if not a

happy event. Then again, my recollection of one of the two aforementioned nights in Mexico City is still mostly blocked out.

But I can say from first hand experience, that the desire to kill is a real part of human gray matter, and it's genetically meant to be there. It's what you do with that deadly group of neurons that matters... the end justifies the... More than likely, it has something to do with the shortened form of the infamous MAO-A gene on the X chromosome, but more research needs to be done to unravel the gene's role in enjoying carnage.

Meeting-backup with Phillip at his house, I'd brought along my old .303 *British Enfield* rifle. It was an WWII bolt-action clip-fed rifle, which I'd purchased used, for the huge sum of \$25, at *Ye Olde Man Hunter*, next to the Potomac River in Alexandria, Virginia. The shop was just downstream from the District of Columbia. Phillip, who was a far better shot than I, brought only a well worn, somewhat scratched-up .22 caliber *Marlin*, a tube-fed semi-auto rifle.

Though not exactly poverty stricken, Phillip's family wasn't well-off. His dad was a telephone lineman, who thanks to the union, earned decent money, but

Phillip's sister was always sick, with big hospital bills, and so the family lived poorly. Early one morning, Phillip's dad gone to change-out a transformer and happily found the aforementioned .22 rifle propped-up against the base of the telephone pole. Why the gun was left there remained a mystery. Neither Phillip nor I had a scope on our rifles, using only the original crude, but reliable, iron sights. Phillip was a born shooter and could generally hit birds on the wing, with that low powered old .22 rifle, and sometimes at over one hundred yards. He had an intuitive feel for the effects of wind and gravity on the bullet. When it came to shooting, he was a freak of nature. Often, he'd just point and shoot, without having to take the time to line-up the sights. He seemed to instinctively know where the bullet was going to go, ergo he rarely missed.

The way we hunted the groundhogs was fairly unorthodox, and slightly unfair to the giant rodents. The animal looks and lot like a large rat or a fat heavy duty squirrel, but without the fluffy tail. Our Dad's shirts came from the cleaners, nicely folded in plastic bags, backed with a stiff piece of white cardboard. Once we were at Goat's farm, we taped the pieces of white cardboard to sharp sticks, which

we then jammed in the ground right next to the groundhog's hole. The cardboard was oriented in such a manner, that when the groundhog came out of his hole, his dark brown fur-covered head and upper body would be nicely silhouetted, against the backdrop of the white cardboard. We'd place the pieces of stiff white cardboard on the far side of the animal borrow, facing the small distant hill, which served as our shooting position.

In such a fashion, we had staked out six holes around our hill, from about 80 to 220 yards. Sometimes, we'd walk to the white pieces of cardboard and move them from an inactive groundhog hole to another. Phillip and I would alternate shooting. To help steady the firearm, we'd wrap the rifle's strap around our left forearm, or make a dirt mound and cover it with leaves of grass to help steady the rifle. Often when shooting in the wild, I'd simply place the barrel of the rifle up against the side of a tree. The tree not only served to brace the rifle, but also helped to concealed me from the eyes of the animal. When sneaking-up on game, I'd often move from tree to tree, always walking into the wind, while watching where I stepped, to avoid noise-making twigs and dry leaves.

Once we were laying belly-to-earth on the grassy hilltop with our rifles in hand, if a groundhog stuck his head out of the hole, it would be starkly contrasted against the bright white cardboard, and therefore easier to sight in on. Frequently, the curious groundhog would come out of the hole and seemed to be mystified by the presence of the white cardboard. The animal would just stare it, apparently wondering what it was. That momentary delay gave us the extra time to make a more accurate shot.

Shooting this way was a little like fishing, since you never knew how long it would take for the groundhog to show himself, or whether he was even in the hole. This approach to hunting had been invented by the local farmers of northern Virginia, long ago. However, they had used common cardboard painted with whitewash. During the depression, the poor country folks had been known to roast and eat groundhogs, at least according to Phillip's old Grandpa. He said they tasted a little musty, like squirrel. 'But when you're real hungry, it tastes great.' Personally, I don't care for the taste of squirrel. That day, Phillip and I were just killing the animals, merely because we liked to kill, yet there was some justification since the groundhogs were



bad for Goat's crops.

The powerful bullet of the .303 Enfield, at the 200 yards distance dropped only about three inches. However, the much lower powered .22, which Phillip was shooting, would drop around twenty inches at that same distance. Consequently, Phillip had to shoot well above the groundhog to compensate for the bullet's drop. Moreover, Phillip's small light-weight .22 bullet was more susceptible to the effects of wind. Wind deflection is usually less for the larger more powerful rounds. But, Phillip intuitively compensated for the shortcomings of the smaller bullet.

Out of the six groundhogs we killed, Phillip bagged four, and I only nailed two, but I did bag the furthest one out. Like I said, Phillip was a natural born shooter, but he wasn't a natural born killer. As mentioned, I have known killers, lots of legal ones in the military, but a few illegal ones, as well. Later, I discuss two hitmen I knew, one of them I knew for many years. Of the illegal killers I've known, both were friendly (to me) psychopaths. One killed out of what he deemed to be necessity, albeit it was clear to me that he just loved killing people. He was a Mexican, and an international drug dealer. He also

owned part interest in a counterfeiting set-up. Since he loved boxing, he helped to set-up local fights, and sometimes refereed. The other killer I knew for many years, a well employed hitman named, Andrew Studler. He did his killings solely for a well known Mobile car dealer, who imported massive amounts of cocaine from Jamaica, and occasionally directly from Columbia. Andrew was an off-and-on acquaintance of mine, for more than thirty years. Before becoming a hitman, he'd been a bank robber, and had been shot by the police, while running from the bank. The getaway driver had abandoned Andrew, who ended-up going to prison for a few years. When he got out, he worked as a janitor at the YMCA, before becoming the employee of the car dealer. Where it may be okay to kill for just reasons, neither of the aforementioned killers killed for righteous reasons, and both killed numerous people.

I first meant Andrew, while I too was working at the YMCA. One day after a hard workout, I was taking a relaxing shower. Andrew came into the large gang shower room, wanting to bathe before returning to his apartment. He liked to shower at the YMCA, since the showers there, never ran out of hot water. He turned-on the shower water, about three shower

heads removed from mine. As he adjusted the water temperature, I noticed that he had several large and deep dimples in his abdomen and right leg. When I questioned him about the dimples, he explained that he'd been shot by two cops. He was so open about describing the details of his failed bank robbery, I was taken aback, yet appreciated his candor. He calmly described the event with a matter-of-fact flat affect, in a relaxed unashamed manner. *He's got no real emotion, and no shame.*

“I robbed a bank and should have gotten away with it. I trusted this young guy to drive the car for me. That was my big mistake! I was out of the bank in under a minute, but when I came outside... no car. The bastard had gotten cold feet... drove-off and left me high and dry. Never heard from him since. With no car, I just ran for it, but the cops surrounded the area. At one point, I rolled under a big semi-truck, as I came-up on the other side, there stood two cops, guns drawn, and I stupidly tried to shoot them, but they already had a bead on me. They fired first, knocking me backwards, then another bullet knocked me flat on my back. I'd dropped my gun and so I got up, and they shot me again. That time, my leg flew behind me, and I went down on my face. After that, I

just laid there... figured I was gonna die... guess I got lucky.”

Perchance, he'd volunteered the last sentence, just to watch its effect on me. Not but a few weeks after going to work at the *YMCA*, Andrew meant the car dealer, and at first, became the man's chauffeur. Later, Andrew was promoted to being the car dealer's personal body guard, and then finally Andrew became the car dealer's confidential hitman. Since the car dealer dealt in massive amounts of cocaine, Andrew's talents with a gun were regularly needed. He wasn't a great shot, but just enjoyed killing close-up.

“You ain't got to be a good shot to kill people, close-up.” He'd say.

According to Andrew, the greatest threats, when dealing drugs were, first and foremost, crooked cops, and second, the drug competitors. Andrew claimed that the local sheriff and several high ranking cops were on the take. More than one low ranking cop had lost their job, because they'd bothered the car dealer, by arresting a transporter or a dealer. Of course, the cop would be fired for some other nefarious reason: citizen complaint, late to work too often, too many traffic violations, etc.

Apparently, he always killed at close range, and always with a handgun. He pretended to be indifferent about the job, but I sensed he relished the killings. Where combat vets can discuss their kills, a hitman generally can't, for fear of arrest, but through the years, Andrew used to tell me about how he did his kills. He'd carefully omit who, where, why, and when. Most of his kills were in the United States, but two were out of the country, probably in Jamaica or Columbia. Andrew was big and black, so he had no trouble blending-in in Jamaica. He seemed to enjoy the fact that I was careful to never ask too many questions. Sometimes I think he altered the truth of the description, so I couldn't ID the murder victim.

A couple years back, Andrew died of a sudden heart attack in old age, and never once did he seem to regret his murderous life. He was a devout Catholic, and viewed his kills as simply a job. He went to confession every Sunday, and died confident that he was going to paradise. He remained an active killer, until two years shy of his own death. He'd stopped killing, when a stroke put him in a motorized wheelchair. Contradictorily, he seemed to love people. He rode the motorized battery powered wheelchair everywhere that its battery range would

allow, and then some, for often he'd have to be rescued, when his battery had died. Andrew's former employer, the car dealer, would send out a flatbed tow truck to pick him up, and transport him home. Andrew remained seated in the electric wheelchair up on top of the flatbed. Even though a killer, Andrew hated being alone.

His kills were fairly unglamorous. Nothing like those in the Hollywood movies. No five hundred yard rifle shot, with a ten thousand dollar weapon, no sophisticated bomb with a mercury swivel switch, no exotic untraceable poison, etc. Andrew would first perform a little reconnoissance to scout-out the target area a few days before, determining: its proximity to police stations, the routes and regularity of police patrols, locations of cameras at intersections and stores, areas of dense population, locations of barking dogs, alternate escape routes, etc. Andrew would also determine the best location to get-rid of his clothes and the weapon, which he'd used during the hit. He used handy wipes to get of any gunpowder reside. He usually wouldn't attempt to hide or dispose of the body. Only twice did he dispose of the body, because both were crooked cops, who worked for the car dealer's drug competitors, in

other states. Andrew stressed the fact that when you killed a cop, you had to make sure the body was never found. I suspect Andrew had bribed someone with a crematorium. He once told me that when you cremate a body, you still had to sift through the cool ashes, incase there was many surgically implanted metal parts in the body: joints, rods, teeth, plates, etc.

“You just can’t trust the guy at the funeral home, you got to go through the ashes yourself.”

The day of a hit, Andrew would usually just take a cab, but get dropped-off six to eight blocks from the target’s home. That way no cab driver would be able to say that they’d dropped someone near the murder scene. Before getting in the cab, he’d put-on thin driving or golfing gloves. He’d wear a natural appearing long wig, nondescript cheap sunglasses, and workout gear (bland jogging clothes, a light weight jacket to better conceal the weapon, and nondescript comfortable tennis shoes). He’d only get the driver a reasonable tip to avoid the driver taking notice. Arriving at the target’s house, he’d ring the doorbell. If the target answered, he’d just smile, pull the gun out from under the lightweight jacket, and shoot him three times. If another member of the

family answered the door, Andrew would say he was with the neighbor watch, and would ask to speak with the man of the house, who was always the target.

Andrew would quickly shoot the target twice in the heart and once in the head, using a silenced .22 magnum revolver, with hollow points. He enjoyed the dependability of the revolver, the power of the small magnum, the tissue destruction produced by the hollow point, and the reduced sound of the silenced small .22 caliber. Around 1836, Samuel Colt created perhaps the most reliable type of gun ever made... the revolver. Where Andrew might have been wrong, is that the revolver typically makes more noise than an automatic. Although he did occasionally use an automatic.

“I killed them in a good way... fast, that way they didn’t have time to be afraid... no fear... probably no real pain! Their life just comes to an end, Joey... no fuss, no muss. The big noise is when they fall down. Most of the time, they just look surprised, as I’m pulling the trigger. Ha, Ha! Sometimes, they say something like: ‘don’t,’ or ‘what are you doing?’”

Having killed the target, Andrew would put the



gun back inside the light weight jacket and calmly jog away, using his preplanned route, which minimized being seen or being exposed to any camera. At a preselected location, he'd dispose of the gun, gloves, jacket, wig, and glasses. The preselected location was often a vast body of water: a river, a big lake, an ocean, etc.

He'd first remove the spent and unspent cartridges, from the cylinder and disposed of them in a separate location. Before disposing of the gun, he'd use a very thin rat-tail file on the inside of the barrel, which he'd have left at the preplanned disposal point. The rat-tail file also had a sharpened pointed end to serve as a back-up weapon, if someone surprised him, while disposing of the weapon, but he never used it for that. The file being rigorously rammed in and out of the gun barrel negated the ability of the police to tie the weapon, to any of the recovered bullets. For the same reason, he'd have also hidden a short handled sledge hammer and a brick, to bend the barrel, and to break-up the gun.

Later, he'd calmly drive back to Mobile, but he'd first drive to another far away location, using preplanned back roads, which actually carried him further away from Mobile. He stay there a few days,

meet folks, then head back to Mobile. He used phony IDs, furnished by the car dealer, and always paid in cash. He did this so that when he finally came back into Mobile, he approached the city from a direction, which did not correspond to the murder's location. He did this since, even back then, some major highways had cameras.

Andrew didn't use buses, trains, or planes, since it meant he'd have been on camera, and seen by clerks. He was always careful to abide by the traffic laws, and didn't drive in bad weather. Consequently, he'd only kill on days with clear weather, and which were slotted to have a good forecast the following day. He'd wear a baseball cap and sunglasses in case a traffic-cam picked him up, and didn't ever wash his car, having drove it through muddy areas, so there was some amount of strategically splashed mud on his license plate. In Mobile, he normally drove a clean and shiny Mercedes, with custom wheels and paint.

Once, he told me about shooting a person in a grocery store parking lot, one hour after sunset. It could have been any state, and as long as five years prior to his telling me about it. It may not have happened in a grocery store parking lot, perhaps it

was department store parking lot. Nevertheless, I believe it did happen. He wore his usual natural looking wig and sunglasses, light windbreaker, and a pair of thin golf gloves. He made sure that the grocery store didn't have cameras, covering the parking lot. Andrew allowed the man to load his groceries into the trunk, and then as the victim was loading the last bag, Andrew walked-up behind the person, quickly shot him in the back of the head twice, then twice in the back just behind the heart, barely to the left side of the backbone. He then shoved the dead man's upper torso into the trunk, grabbed the feet, heaving the rest of the person into the truck. Andrew slammed the trunk lid, and walked away. There was never any drama, no music playing, no popcorn. He commented many murders, and was never considered as a suspect; at least, that's what he thought. He told me that when he'd confess his killings to the priest, he would simply say that he'd killed a man, who was not an innocent man, and that he (Andrew) didn't have to ever elaborate. The priest never asked for details.

Probably the boldest killing Andrew told me about, he'd carried-out in a crowded restaurant-bar, around lunchtime. According to Andrew, the

restaurant was the only dependable location he could get to the target. The music was so loud that the patrons were constantly shouting to be heard. There were no cameras in the restaurant, nor outside on the street. The place was packed with hungry diners. Moreover, Andrew was again using a silenced thin .22 automatic, but not a magnum. The victim was sitting in a horseshoe shaped booth with his back to a wall, accompanied by a beautiful woman. Andrew went inside wearing his wraparound sunglasses, a golf cap, golfing gloves, and sat down at a table only ten feet away from the target and his date. In addition, Andrew had put cotton balls, between his upper and lower gums and his cheek walls, to slightly distort his facial structure. In addition, he hadn't shaved in three weeks.

He politely ordered a cheeseburger and fries, without making eye contact with the waitress, or with the patrons. The cheeseburger and fries allowed him to eat, without using utensils, and leaving fingerprints; besides, he liked cheeseburgers. He affected an English accent in speaking with the waitress. Earlier, he had loaded the gun with gloves, so there would be no prints on the shell casings, nor on the gun. He had the gun carefully taped inside of

a folded newspaper, loaded, cocked, and ready to fire. It was just laying on his small dining table, next to the silverware. The newspaper was taped with scotch tape in such a fashion, that it remained folded, and served as a concealment holster for the pistol. The pistol was taped inside the newspaper holster, in such a way that the slide of the automatic could still eject the spent shell-casings, chamber rounds, and fire. Andrew even made sure that there were no prints on the newspaper, nor on the pieces of tape, which held it closed.

When the good-looking woman, accompanying the target, got-up to use the lady's room, Andrew left a twenty on the table for his lunch (without fingerprints). He walked straight over to the target and asked him, if he could please tell him (Andrew) the time. When the guy looked down at his watch, Andrew, with his hand inside the carefully folded newspaper and holding the pistol's grip, pointed the business end of the newspaper at the top of the man's bowed head, and shot him three times quickly, right through the top of his cranium. According to Andrew, the folded newspaper was almost touching the guy's skull. Andrew told me that the time was twelve thirty (He probably changed the time, to keep

me in the dark.). The guy got the word 'twelve' out, then with the three fast shots, started to silently fall face first toward the table, but Andrew used the back of his other hand to gently push the dead man back upright in the booth. No one noticed, so Andrew thanked the dead man for the time, and walked out of the restaurant. The folded newspaper, containing the gun, was casually pressed under Andrew's left arm.

Andrew was always so matter-of-fact about his descriptions. Occasionally, I'd drop by his townhouse and we'd have a drink, and watch a video on his TV. He liked westerns. At times, he would have a couple of girls over, in which case Andrew's employment was never discussed. If anyone was present, and Andrew's employment came-up, he'd say that he was the bodyguard for the car dealer, and that he'd never had to fire his weapon. As mentioned, the car dealer owned the local sheriff, and so even though Andrew was a felon, he had a concealed weapons permit. Some states allow ex-cons to own guns, but not Alabama. The Alabama justice system is designed to keep a criminal, thinking he or she is always a criminal... no real forgiveness.

As stated, for Andrew, murder was merely a job.

The way he talked, he might as well have been selling cars for the car dealer. He said that shooting people was easier than the usual work-a-day world. He said he rather be dead than work a regular job. But for all the money he'd made working for the drug dealer, Andy died relatively poor. In old age, he over ate, became extremely heavy, loved fast women, and snorting blow. The blow destroyed him financially, and likely brought on his stroke, and the resultant paralysis.

He spent his last two years riding around in that expensive motorized wheelchair, yet never seemed to mind, having the disability. Nothing appeared to get to the hitman. One Sunday, he suddenly died of the aforementioned heart attack, while in church. The priest stopped talking, when Andrew hit the floor. He always told me that, aside from the confessional, I was the only person, he ever told about his killings. That fact made me nervous. I went to his funeral, and no one mentioned the killings. Sadly, the car dealer didn't show. Maybe, he was afraid that some overly talkative soul would get up to the podium and would have spilled the beans about Andrew's relationship with the car dealer.

Andrew would often repeat the claim that all of

his victims were bad guys, including the two cops. He never told me too much about the two cops, and didn't tell me about the cops, till right before he died. Andrew said killing the two cops was the most difficult of all his kills. He had agreed to meet and pay the two cops their extortion money, on a deserted piece of rural highway. When the cops drove up, behind Andrew's truck, he got out smiling and was holding two brown envelopes, one in each hand. The gun under his unzipped jacket, being squeezed tightly in his left armpit. It was the only time, he used a large caliber pistol, a .45 semiautomatic. The two cops remained in their car. Andrew reached in their car to hand each cop their envelop, and politely asked them to count it to make sure it was the correct amount. The envelopes were purposely heavily taped-up, and contained only with cut paper. While the two cops were struggling to remove the tape, Andrew drew his weapon, and shot them both through the open driver window. He then reached in the car and retrieved the taped envelops, putting them in his jacket pockets. He then dropped the tailgate on his pickup, threw the bodies onto a plastic tarp he already had in the back of his pickup truck, then covered them with the tarp, and then placed a several pieces of old used lumber, on top of



them, which he'd brought with him. Cop cars didn't have dash cameras, then. To avoid the problem with tire prints, the next day, Andrew got new tires, and threw the old ones in the bayou. During one of my visits to Andrew's townhouse, he got himself extremely drunk, and told me he'd once killed a 'funeral guy.' Andrew was proud of the fact that he'd never made anyone suffer, other than perhaps the victim's surviving relatives. It was difficult to believe, but even Andrew had once been someone's baby.

<https://www.wideopenspaces.com/groundhog-hunting-308-22-250-rifle-video/>

Once we were done shooting the groundhogs, Phillip and I slung our rifles across our backs, picked up the animal bodies and carried them to the barn, by holding their small rear legs. Goat said he'd later feed the rodents to his monstrous pinkish white hogs. He called his prize hogs 'Chesters.' It was the first time, I'd seen such large pigs.

<http://knowledgebase.lookseek.com/Chester-White-Pig.html>

When we arrived at the barn, the old baldheaded farmer appeared to be searching for something. He was walking around outside the barn, dressed in denim coveralls, and a red flannel shirt, and was dragging a dirty brown gunny sack behind himself.

“What are you looking for Grandpa?” Phillip asked.

“I need some’n heavy, like a brick or a rock, Phillip.” Goat said.

“You want these groundhogs, Grandpa?”

“Yeah, just drop em right there. I’ll give-em to the Chesters, later.”

Goat then seemed to spot something. Reaching under the corner of the decrepit gray wooden barn, the old farmer yanked-out a softball-sized chunk of jagged broken concrete.

“This’ll do just fine.” The farmer stated, palming the heavy chunk.

He told us how he hated cats, and so he’d put a litter of kittens inside the dirty rough burlap sack. Cruelly, the aged senior then tossed the heavy piece of concrete into the sack, which caused a lot of

desperate yowling and mewing to come from inside, since no doubt it had landed atop the kittens, but the old man didn't seem to notice the pathetic sounds. He simply twisted and knotted the sac closed, walked over to a nearby algae covered pond, and holding the knot at the top of the sack with both hands, he spun around once, heaving the sack of cats and concrete, like he was a hammer thrower in the Olympics.

The sack then sailed away, out over the pond, as Goat lost his balance and sat down hard on the dirt, laughing at his own clumsiness. The weighted sack splashed down fifty feet from shore, and because of the concrete, submerged straightaway. We walked over to Goat and I could see he was smiling, as if he'd accomplished something good. I was amazed at how easily he'd killed the kittens. *Their lives don't mean a thing to him! Of course we just shot those groundhogs.* My eyes then focused on a dark vacancy in the bright green surface algae, where from the circular ripples were traveling outward. Briefly, I thought about what it must be like to be the kittens inside the flooding sack. *Maybe they have an air bubble, trapped inside the sack with them.* As the image of the kittens' plight began to form, I changed my mind, about imagining said plight. Why bother to try

to imagine such a gruesome thing? Occasionally, I still think about the kittens in that wet dark gunny sack, for here I am, fifty something years later, writing about them.

“I ain’t got to listen to no more of that damn cat mewling and yowling. Only one I wants is the old gray mamma cat to keep down the rats. Don’t need all those worthless kittens, draining her dry... too many critters.” The old farmer loudly announced. *He talks so loud, he’s probably deaf.*

“What’s the mamma cat’s name, sir?” I asked.

“I don’t give names to cats, sonny. What’s the point? Cats don’t know nothing about names.” The old man answered.

“The damn kittens will just suck her dry... keep her weak, so she can’t do her mouse’n. When she dies, I can go get another mouser from that farm over yonder, but I don’t like being beholden.” The old farmer then pointed some direction, while still sitting on the ground by the pond.

“Say... you boys going over to the coot show, tonight? Long as ya’ll out this way, ya might as well go give it a look-see. It’s worth your while. Ya know this year, they have a real first rate show... a real

looker! One hell of ah bu-tee-full redhead... I mean to tell ya'll..." Phillip's Grandpa commented, while getting up off the ground, and dusting himself off, having already forgotten about the drowning sac of kittens.

For the old farmer, killing the cats was as dramatic as throwing out the garbage. One-second the cats were descending into the dark depths of the pond to certain death; the next second, his old mind was on a coot show. *Wonder what a coot show is?* But while I had just shot a couple of groundhogs, I found the drowning of the kittens to be a little depressing. *I suppose Goat doesn't really care, if an animal is wild or domesticated. In truth, it doesn't really make a difference.* I then wondered if his killing of animals might not have extended to humans, whom he didn't like; after all, he had shot three Germans in WWI. *I suppose, in some respects it's all just living lumps of protoplasm.* Never having heard of a coot show, I looked to Phillip for clarification. Instead, Phillip only smiled and turned away to answer his Grandpa.

"Yeah, we're going Grandpa. Joey here will love it. Is it in the same spot out there in the woods, as it was last year?" He asked.

"Yeah boy! They got some'n real special, with

that redhead. She's a nice gal, and she's got some tricks that are real different, too! A sure nuff humdinger...a show stopper and an eyeball popper, Phillip! *This has got to be some kind of strip show!* You boys gonna like what ya see. Yes, sirree Bob! That there country music never sounded so good! They also got a monkey show in another tent. But, ya'll gonna love that little redheaded filly." He nodded and grinned his response, then licked his old lips, apparently devouring her memory.

*This guy is mean, and for such an old man, he seems pretty horny.* His light blue eyes were widely spaced and slightly wild, in that his lids stayed too low, resting on the top of his pupils, instead on the top of his blue irises. Moreover, he didn't make genuine eye contact, not even with his own grandson, while expressing such apparent enthusiasm about the redhead. With that comment, the old farmer took Phillip aside, whispered a few words, smiled again, but still no genuine face to face. Standing there waiting for Phillip to leave, I spied a small cracked and greying wooden plaque on the side of the barn. When I pointed it out to Phillip, he told me it was a homemade wooden tombstone for his Grandma. *She's buried right there by the barn!* Goat

proudly announced that he had made the plaque for her. His wife had died two years prior. According to Phillip, Goat had made the plaque, out of a scrape piece of thick rough cut lumber, using only a hammer and a wood-chisel. The farmer's attitude was one of prideful self-sufficiency.

“Craving the words was the hard part, so I just kept it simple. The letters don't look too good, but they're better than chalk or paint. Made the coffin, myself. Made it out of some used fencing. Started building it, soon as I could tell she wasn't gonna make it... had plenty of boards. Nobody helped me make the coffin, and nobody was there, when I dug that deep grave. Next day, after I buried her, the preacher dropped-by... said a few words. Lot'a good that did. I never went to his church, but she did.” Goat matter-of-factly stated, pointing at the plaque on the outside of the barn.

*A practical old man... Wonder if other farmers are like him.* I'd never seen a wooden tombstone, especially not one nailed to a barn wall. *Just like her body, it'll soon rot.* Her name was chiseled-in, with the years of her life, below. With her death, the old man had nothing but his crops, pigs, chickens, the one cat, the rare visits from his children and grandchildren,

and the annual coot show. The aged farmer couldn't read, nor did he have a TV, so I wondered what he did, when he was alone. *He'll probably die soon. Wonder who'll find his dead body?* Phillip and I headed to the car, cleaned and oiled our two rifles, stored them in the trunk, then drove off. The old man then turned his back to us and headed back into his barn. We yelled a 'thank you' to his retreating back, for allowing us to hunt. He simply raised his hand to say, 'You're welcome.'

At Phillip's suggestion, we stopped at a drugstore, in the first small town we came to, where we each bought a multipack of condoms. Phillip then drove fast for more than an hour, ranging further from Virginia and deeper into the West Virginia woods of Greenbrier County, several miles outside of Lewisburg. The area was populated with farms and patches of dense forests. Back then, parts of West Virginia were an environmental nightmare, due to the massive amounts of coal mining, yet Greenbrier County appeared to be free of the burden of coal mining, and remained an attractive bucolic sight.

Now, the coal companies stop at nothing, dynamiting away entire mountaintops, to scoop out the highly polluting, but ever lucrative, shiny black



crystals. Back then, often the state was foggy, due to the burning of coal, in many of the people's homes. Since it was mined in the state, coal was cheap for the residents, and so widely used. The depressing strange fog seemed to have a slightly greenish hue, probably due to the pollutants from the coal. Some folks called it, 'West Virginia pea soup.' Back then, it somehow seemed appropriate that West Virginia was both the most culturally backwards and environmentally devastated state... hand and hand. The new clean coal really works, but if done effectively, it is extremely expensive, rendering the product impractical. Clean coal can be done in several different ways, and at different rates and times, opening the door for cheating, with covert pollution. If Trump wins the election, you can bet he'll back the coal companies and probably remove their pollution restrictions. Still, Hillary has her problems, too. Nevertheless, the ever crumbling environment should take precedence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vW-bjsuUhQ>

Throughout the trip, Phillip refused to give me

any details about the mysterious coot show. He only said that he didn't want to spoil the surprise. But still, after the old man said that the show had a beautiful redhead in it, coupled with the fact that we'd stopped to buy condoms, I knew the show involved loose women, and so I was glad we were going. Driving through the West Virginia countryside, Phillip and I just listened to the radio. Every station in West Virginia was either country music, or some preacher screaming about sin and hell, and generally asking for money. Going to the coot show was relatively easy, but returning home from the show that night in the poisonous fog was a nightmare of concentration, especially since we were drunk, and it was more than a four hour trip. Consequently, I used the micro-steering technique, I'd learned from Sam, the Navy lieutenant, many years before. Periodically, we'd pull off the road to puke. Phillip and I lived just outside the District of Columbia, in Alexandria, Virginia.

Pulling-up into a huge grassy field, seemingly out in the middle of nowhere, there were two large circular tannish gray circus tents. Behind one of the larger tents, were five smaller dark dark green rectangular tents. They looked like army tents.

Phillip said the second big round tent was for the monkey show. Then, I inquired about the smaller tents.

“You’ll see soon enough. Those little tents are the best part of the show. I’ll guarantee that there’s nothing in (Washington) DC, like what you’re about to see here, Joey.” Phillip loudly declared.

Getting out of the car and walking toward the coot show tent, country music came flooding out, across the grassy parking area. The lot was filled, with old pick-up trucks, most with faded paint jobs and well worn tires, but there were also a couple of shiny new tan and brown West Virginia State Trooper *Ford Galaxies*, with the usual red dome gum-ball machine on the top. Ergo, I figured that nothing too terribly illegal going on inside. Of course, throughout time and depending on the location on earth, with certain exceptions, the definition of what is legal is usually in flux. Even when the statute may be well phrased, its interpretation may significantly vary, depending on litigators, judges, and of course, the ever corrupt politicians. Moreover, each person has their own ideas, concerning what should be legal. There have been many cases where a defendant is clearly guilty, but the jury lets him go, simply

because they don't care for the law, or the law's punishment. After all, juries are only human. It wasn't but a few years ago, that booze was a crime. While what is legal may indeed be transcribed on paper, in the courtroom the exegesis and execution of a statute may oft be considered to be somewhat nebulous in the mind of the reader.

A few years back, a large marijuana arrest could easily land a person in prison with a life sentence, and in some case did, when jay walking is clearly more dangerous than smoking weed. Now, marijuana is legal in several states, and ninety percent of the cops I know, in the ultra-conservative State of Alabama, think it should be legalized. The hold-up on the legalization of weed is all about the government trying to make money off the growing and sale of the plant, much as it does with tobacco and alcohol. Anything that involves appreciable amounts of cash, the government needs to get its greedy fingers on it, i.e., taxes (lots of different types), various licenses, countless certificates, various types of testing (medical, psych, knowledge, etc.), inspections (countless types of building, boats, autos, home, etc.), fines (too many types to list), court and probation costs, etc.

Phillip was barely seventeen and I was not yet sixteen; nevertheless, we strolled right past the bouncers, without having to show an ID. We just handed-over the steep three dollar cover charge. The tent was smoke filled and packed with rowdy drunks, mostly farmers and farm hands. The music was thunderous, and considering the waitresses and the dancers on the stage, the atmosphere was electrically charged with sex. There were plenty of whistles and cat calls. The milieu appeared to be a country version of an early 60s strip club. Alluring stark-naked women were strutting around in high heels, serving drinks, while two other totally nude beauties were up on a raised stage, dancing to popular country tunes. While I've never been big on country music, the women were undeniably amazing, so the music took-on an associated appeal.

Hot female bodies of various shapes and sizes were pounding out the rhythms of artists like Jimmy Dean, Johnny Cash, George Jones, Roger Miller, Patsy Cline, Marty Robbins, etc. The beers were two bits and a shot of liquor was a buck. Now days, I never use the term 'bit.' I'd picked-up the word from my Dad. For the younger readers, a bit is twelve and a half cents; two bits is therefore a quarter, and so, a

dollar is eight bits. The term 'bit' was probably taken from the famous ancient Spanish coin, (*real de a ocho*, or the piece of eight, eight bits), which at one time, was the equivalent of Spain dollar, roughly one ounce of silver. The ancient silver coin, was roughly the equivalent of \$20, today. In a way, it seems to imply that our government (United States) cares twenty times less, than did the ancient Spanish crown, for its citizens. Periodically, it was used as coinage in the early American colonies, and is the coin, which the original US silver dollar was predicated upon. In fact, many of America's early colonists used the Spanish coin (the piece of eight) for currency. A silver dollar is one thing, and a paper dollar is sort of a punch-line.

But the actual United States 'silver dollars' didn't come along till around 1794, and ended around 1935 (112 years), then the last of the minted silver coins (90% pure) ended in 1965. The 1792 Act, was largely the doings of George Washington, and mandated the construction of a new minting facility. The first buildings was erected at Seventh Street and Filbert in Philadelphia. The foundation was laid in the summer of 1792. Eventually, a total of three buildings comprised the first mint. Except for a few

special coins, America's silver coin currency will probably never be used again; unless the American public gets some backbone, and our kids are better educated about how banks and corporations are running our government, bleeding the fiscal wherewithal from the veins of this country's general populace. Ever wonder what would happen, if everyone just suddenly decided that precious metals, like gold, platinum, and silver, had no real value, other than their industrial uses? What if the general population were to begin to mint their own money?

What if America redistributed the wealth, so that at the end of each year, all money became worthless; then at the beginning of each new decade, a different money was printed and evenly distributed amongst the citizens? You might see that as an absurd suggestion, and it certainly may be. Quite possibly one day, all currency will simply be digitalized, with the paper money and coinage being deemed worthless, unless it's still collectable, and that would certainly make the above suggestion more doable. Of course, material goods might still be something to be assessed and managed by the government. But rather than that, I like to fantasize that the American people

decide to rise-up and take back the wealth of the United States, from the greedy banks, the relatively non-tax paying, mega corporations, as well as the massively costly military industrialists. Prices for goods and services could be drastically reduced simply because there would be no more ultra greedy board members and CEOs. The ‘one-percenters,’ which people talk about, are in fact, not one percent. The massive hoarding of wealth is possessed by less than .001 percent of the Americans, and it’s the 99.999 percent, which obviously most of us fall into, which is getting the financial shaft.

The farmers seemed to especially enjoy Roger Miller’s, *King of the Road*, as background for the women’s stripping! For some reason that music didn’t seem appropriate to me. While the stripping was truly wonderful, I failed to see how the song figured-in, since many of the songs lacked the necessary rhythm for women to strip by. Every time Roger would croon the phrase, “*king of the road*,” the drunk and semi-drunk farmers would loudly sing along. The farmers loved it, and all things considered, so did I. No customers were sober, and so everyone, including the cops, would later drive home drunk. Drunk driving was no big deal, back then.



Phillip and I just sat on a wooden bench, sipped beer, and watched the magnificent female forms move about the room and stage. In that moment, with the alcohol and the surrounding feminine beauty, life was very good. Regardless of the raw rural motif, these beautiful women were wonders to behold. The parts of the young male heterosexual limbic brain, which appreciates feminine beauty and stipulates sexual interest, sometimes functions best, without all the sophisticated cultural accoutrements.

Most psychiatrists and psychologists are typically on the weird side (Take my word for this, it is nearly a universal truth.), and generally have their own abnormal psychological issues. They too often assume that others also have significant mental aberrations, and rarely realize how hard-wired a large percentage of men are in reference to their very normal sex drives and desires. Much later in my life, I had to work with various groups of psychiatrists and psychologists. Going to work was a bit like going to a psychiatric zoo, and not just because of the patients. A high percentage of those ‘professionals’ were industrial-strength recreational pill-poppers. Usually each claimed that the pills were being taken, so they might better approximate normalcy, but I had

doubts, since they rarely seemed normal. Most of them were probably just chasing a high.

With all the rhythmically undulating naked beauties, loud music, and free flowing beer and booze, the hard working farmers certainly didn't lack for enthusiasm; their limbic brains were conspicuously operating at full tilt, and considering my ripe old age of fifteen, my limbic brain was well beyond theirs. As mentioned, there were five dimly lit smaller dark green tents just behind the large tent, I was currently enjoying. These smaller tents should have come equipped with revolving doors. While an old olive green military generator supplied the power for the two big tents, while the warm dim glow of kerosene lanterns lit the interiors of the five smaller tents. The little tents were about eight feet by six feet, and came equipped with a single twin bed mattress on a plywood base, but of course these beds were strictly recreational. Just like the rest of us, the two visiting State Troopers made good use of those little green tents. Every time I'd ask Phillip about the redhead, which Goat had made such a big deal about, he'd just repeat his manta.

“Just wait and see what's coming Joey, before you pick one.... wait and see. You definitely don't

want to spend your money and shoot your wad before you take a gander at the redhead! Grandpa always knows best! Just keep it in your pants a while longer.” *Phillip has such a way with words.*

What we were waiting for was the well-formed, Miss Millie, a red hot twenty-five year old erotic show stopper, if ever there was one. She was the redheaded woman, which old Eli had enthusiastically alluded to. When Millie finally took the stage, I forgot to breathe and could literally and pleasantly feel sweat bursting from my pours, etc.! Her feminine beauty flowed right across the stage, like red hot lava. She wore absolutely nothing, not even shoes. Before beginning her routine, she set a small box on the stage, allowing me to marvel at the sway of her full breasts. Her near erotic body and angelic face transfixed every man and most of the women in the tent. The woman was the most sexually stimulating sight, my adolescent brain had ever witnessed, next to that first time encounter with Anna in Spain, at age twelve. For those few minutes on stage and for quite sometime afterwards, Miss Millie owned my soul. Goat had indeed told the truth.

Ms. Millie was something of a sensual study in color contrast. Her skin was a flawless snow white,

and the rest of her was a deep engrossing shade of red: nails, lips, nipples, and hair, both her well trimmed pubic and the long locks for her head. She was a tall curvaceous beauty with only a few ringlets of hair between her shapely smooth ivory thighs, the shade of a Burmese ruby. Her full breast were firm with large elevated red nipples, which matched her crimson lipstick and nail polish. Miss Millie's legs were so long and shapely, she didn't need high heels to give her an attractive posture. Above and below, in the ever moving well-trained spotlight, her auburn hair seemed to glow, against her flawless creamy milk white skin. One-second after spotting the beauty, my Septal Nucleus was fully engaged, and I couldn't drag my eyes off her.

From the beginning of her performance, several drunken horny farmers were pulled off the stage by the other spectators and bouncers. Miss Millie reached-out and slapped one man that grabbed for her, and of course, he loved it, and Miss Millie smiled and winked as she did it. *She's truly understands and enjoys men.* A few fights broke-out, but everyone pitched-in to pull the fighters apart. The men were not so much angry, as they were just aggressive guys, who liked to fight, and the presence of Ms. Millie

provoked their natural desire for aggression. There was no real hate in their game. I'm sure that the psychologists of today would say there was something wrong with them.

Her young slightly moist sculptured face was that of a blue eyed porcelain doll and her perfect high and tight body was strictly built for sex. She smiled the entire time she was on stage; not a fake toothy beam, but a relaxed genuinely unpretentious lovely smile. The smile professed that she sincerely enjoyed the room's intensity, which she commanded. And while it is well known that for many strippers the apparent stage-enjoyment is often less than authentic, this phenomenal woman was the bona fide real McCoy. As we were soon to witness, she thoroughly enjoyed male scrutiny, for as I'm about to describe, there were aspects of her performance which were impossible to have faked.

At first, she danced to Elvis's, *Heart Break Hotel*, but then the music slowed, and the King began singing, *Are You Lonesome Tonight*. That was when the more unusual part of her show commenced. It was something that will probably never be seen in any American strip club, or perhaps for that matter, anywhere on earth. There is the real possibility that

she was the only woman on earth, who could perform that particular feat.

Since that day, I've never heard of such. It's my bet that the erotically feral show, is now as extinct, as is: the earth's environmental wellbeing, integrity in politics, love for foreign peoples, or caring about people's health by the pharmaceutical and medical industries. There are probably only a handful of women on the entire planet, if any, who are capable of pulling-off what she was about to.

During her incendiary undulations to Elvis's, *Heart Break Hotel*, I noticed the small blue box, still laying on the stage. The rectangular box was about ten inches long, and maybe three inches wide, and covered in what looked like shiny silky blue material. She had been careful not to step on it, as she danced gracefully around the stage. *Why is the small box sitting there, right in the way of her dancing?* The moment Elvis began to croon the interrogatory, *Are You Lonesome Tonight*, over the ancient big plywood box speakers, the farmers began to hoot and howl.

"Yeah Baby, I'm sure lonely, tonight!" Several yelled.

Most of them seemed to know what was coming,

as she lifted the lid of the box. Tauntingly, she waved a lovely index finger back and forth, at the howling virile horde. Reaching into the box, with her long red tipped fingers, Ms. Millie gently extracted a bright red number three pool ball! In time with the music, she began to dance, while gently and slowly rubbing the ball, where every guy wished he could be. Then low and behold within seconds, the spotlight indicated that the cardinal red ball had quickly took on a highly provocative wet sheen from Miss Millie, provided by her well functioning vaginal *Bartholin's* glands. *Damn, it's so hot in her!* Miss Millie was patently into her show, as surely as was the all male audience.

“Come to papa, baby!”

She knew exactly how to make best use of the small bright spotlight. Elvis has never sounded that good. Her vaginal lips had slightly parted, allowing the small crimson ball greater access. Even the few waitresses had stopped serving and just stood staring. Everyone in the place was thunderstruck and singularly focused on the small glistening red orb. By thusly sexing the hard ruby sphere, it was as if she was mating with everyone in the tent. Clearly, Miss Millie was in full erotic control.

Squatting-down, holding the red sphere with her gleaming bright crimson fingernails, she continued to slowly rub the shimmering ball between those ever intriguing pink lips, framed by her dazzling red, carefully trimmed pubic hair. This amazing ruby vista of flaming feminine crimson anatomy was molten magic. Like my jeans and my Johnson, parts of my brain were in conflict, for I too felt the need to jump on the stage, and I wasn't nearly drunk.

There was no way I could take my eyes off the red number three ball, until Miss Millie suddenly flicked her long auburn hair to one side, causing me to momentarily glance up into her angelic face, and while she continued to manipulate that wet crimson orb, I realized that she was gazing right into my eager young eyes. Because of the movements of the spotlight, I could see that her eyes were the lightest of blue. *She's like the world's best hallucination.* The corresponding sympathetic response was redlining, and made me feel like I was about to burst through my Levis. They may have been uneducated country farmers, but for that brief period of time, we were all men of like mind and interest... the red hot Miss Millie and her wet and shiny crimson pool ball.

As Miss Millie continued dancing and



manipulating the pool ball, physiologically it became more and more obvious, just how much she thoroughly enjoyed wielding her vast sexual power, for in no time, that soaking wet ball just disappeared upward, directly into heaven, as if she'd inhaled it! This sight was an adolescence's dream come true. Years after, when having sex with various women, including my wife, I'd close my eyes and pretend I was with the exotic Miss Millie. The male's 'mind's eye,' usually located in the right hemisphere of the brain, where visual imagination takes place, is one of God's greatest gifts. It enables the male, as well as some females, to turn a mediocre looking sex partner, into someone that's highly attractive, simply by closing their eyes. It's largely same neuro-tissue which enables the artist to 'see' his or her work, or Einstein to envision his theories; still, mind's-eye links (direct and indirect) to the *Septal Nucleus* are well known.

No sooner had the red ball ascended into nirvana, than Miss Millie again reached down into the blue box, and this time pulled out the blue number two ball. No pool game was ever this exciting. All the goddess's motions were accomplished in perfect synchrony with the music, as

the room stepped-outside of time. She methodically repeated the same actions, with the electric blue number two ball, paralyzing every guy in the place. More importantly, she was clearly approaching her orgasm, since the bright spotlight accentuated a considerable wet shine running down the inside of both her porcelain thighs, just past her knees. *Talk about a genuine full-blown exhibitionist!* Years later, I'd play in a few pool tournaments, only to be distracted by the memories of Miss Millie.

As the blue ball finally rose-up into paradise to sit next to the scarlet three, Millie next removed the last ball, a yellow number one ball, from the box. Once again, she repeated the sensuous rhythmical process. This allowed the substantial vaginal flow to reach down to her feet. She was just that turned on. Once more, some guys had to be forcefully pulled off the stage, and two more brief fights erupted in the crowd. The cat calls were insanely deafening. For a moment, I thought she was going to be gang raped, but the burly bouncers positioned themselves down in front of the stage. *Thank God, they haven't blocked my view.* As with the red and the blue balls, the yellow ball finally disappeared, then within five-seconds, that stimulating and overly excited feminine

exhibitionist passionately cut loose with a primal scream. With her perfectly shaped legs violently shaking, her head flew-back. Her pelvis was uncontrollably undulating, as she crashed to her knees on the stage, clearly in the throws of a powerful orgasm. Right in front of roughly one hundred extremely horny men, she was violently climaxing. That's when Phillip poked me in the side and spoke, as if to say, 'You see Joey? It was worth waiting for!' But then he spoke-up, again.

“Here it is, Joey! Just keep watching! It ain't over, just yet! Just keep watching!” *As if there is anyway that I can possibly look away!*

The Miss Millie was still on her knees, sweat covered her entire post-orgasmic body, and her enter thighs were heavily soaked, while she continued shuddering. Then, illuminated by the brilliant white spotlight, one at a time, the three wet pool balls slowly dropped out, and onto the plywood stage, each with a loud thump. Unexpectedly, the first was the red number three, then the blue two, and last, the yellow one ball! Miss Millie had to have had phenomenal muscular control to have somehow reversed the order of the three balls, intra-vaginally, and apparently that process had launched her into

her massive mind-blowing very public orgasm. *Wonder how much practice that trick took?* How many women do you suppose, could pull-off a public show like that? There's a very real possibility she was the only woman on earth capable of such a mind-blowing performance. *That vagina has got to be an experience!* At that point in the performance, Ms. Millie was clearly spent!

Orgasms never come too late, nor too often.

*The Book of Lies*, by Billy M. Orae

There are many (mostly lesbians and feminists), who feel that strip clubs objectify the female entertainers. Martha Nussbaum is one of the best known authors of female objectification, in her book *Sex and Social Justice*. She seems to assert that there are seven aspects or qualities to 'objectification': denial of autonomy, instrumentality, inertness, fungibility, violability (capable of being violated), ownership, and denial of subjectivity. There is clearly some desperate overlap, with those seven, somewhat vague, factors. While there is truth to them, they seem to over stretch a point. Nevertheless, it was

fairly clear that Miss Millie had reversed the process of objectification. She had obviously objectified the entire male audience, for her own glorious sexual gratification. The climax was her's alone. She owned it, and she had used the men's desire to help jump-start it. I felt so used. The confirmation of the men's overt desire, had helped to launch her *Septal Nucleus*, up beyond the atmosphere, into a high earth orbit.

I'm fairly certain that if you're reading this and happen to be a Southern Baptist, especially if you're a female, there's a fair chance that you think that Miss Millie was the devil incarnate, or at least possessed. But in my book, she was something of an erotically gifted being. If you're a Southern Baptist heterosexual male, you probably wish like hell that you could have seen Miss Millie's show. By-in-large, no one is as sexually bent as are the highly religious folks. The worst the religious lot are the gay religious zealots, who just can't admit that they're gay, even to themselves. Religion seems to have a way of producing abnormally powerful sex drives, in both males and females, gay and straight. Conceivably, because most religions generally teach that sex is only for the blessed relationship of marriage and procreation, ergo highly religious people naturally

overdevelop certain, inhibitory neuronal controls, to avoid or suppress the normal inclinations of sexual 'sin.' They have more than their share of practice at inhibiting their *Septal Nucleus*.

This simply means that parts of the exciting *Septal Nucleus* (the seat of sex and orgasm in the brain) are inhibited by neurons, coming from areas under conscience control, more voluntary regions, those provinces of the gray goop, which release an inhibitory neurotransmitters upon parts of the gloriously thrilling and sinful *Septal Nucleus*. In so doing, this causes the sexual parts of the brain to be more 'controlled,' and so said sexual neurology is rendered temporarily less active, and therefore it is forced to build-up greater levels of neurotransmitter, becoming even more dynamic, more predisposed to firing, and in essence a more powerful entity or urge. Such an unnatural build-up of neurotransmitter (sexual tension), can eventually produce aberrant behavior. This is not to say that restraint is not required at times, especially if the significant other is crazy (believe you me, there are plenty lunatics out there), but it is to say that too much needless inhibition may turn the *Septal Nucleus* into a bit of a ticking time bomb. Then there's the added fact that

the highly religious people, after finally knocking the boots, then feel guilty! This really applies to the gays, who are in denial. It makes them act in ridiculous ways. Long story short, religion really has a way of fucking-up fucking. Praise the Lord! To better understand that piece of neurophysiology a rough and incomplete analogy might be found with a dam. During the rainy season, if occasionally the dam is allowed to open its flood gates, less water weight and pressure develops behind the dam; this keeps the dam from breaking. If the brain has more sexual outlets and is allowed to bleed-off its stores of neurotransmitters, the sex drive is attenuated, more manageable.

Said bleed-off might mean, new and different sex partners, with whom the religious person hasn't become bored with, or if the person is unmarried. However, if religious teachings only allow the individual to experience sex in a restrictively prescribed and less satisfactory fashion, the dam may burst, flooding the valley, creating things like rape, battery, anger, or other undesirable sexually driven misbehaviors. In most minds, too much neurotransmitter simply will not be denied. That's where people, such as the Spanish beauty, Anna,

become a blessing.

After a few recuperative moments, Miss Millie took a deep breathe, smiled, slowly got to her feet, and commenced a wobbly bow. Every man in the audience was yelling, cheering, and clapping. Two bouncers had stepped up to help her off the stage. The plywood stage was visibly wet where her knees and feet had been, and not because of perspiration.

A man, who sounded like a circus barker, then hopped-up on stage and loudly directed everyone to proceed to the adjacent large tent for what he called, 'the monkey show.' He assured us that we all could return for more drinks and fun, afterwards. We should have worn baggy pants, since for a good minute neither Phillip nor I could stand; nonetheless, we were shouting and clapping, while seated and leaning forward. When we finally began to exit the tent, every guy in the place was having a hard time comfortably walking. The smaller tents were all occupied, while big mean-looking bouncers orbited nearby, just incase one of the girls needed rescuing. Eventually, everyone made it over to the large neighboring 'monkey' tent.

The second show in the adjacent tent came with yet another exorbitant three dollar cover charge.



*These folks are making money hand over fist!* I could only hope the monkey show was half as entertaining, as was the amazing Miss Millie. In the large tent, there were no tables, no drinks unless you brought one from the other tent. There was just a series of plain wooden bleachers, set-up in a big circle, surrounding a small hard-packed grassy floor arena, which was nothing more than a circular ring made of flimsy two foot high flimsy chicken-wire, held up by a few flimsy plastic stakes. Surrounding the circle of chicken-wire, and in front of the stands were piles of hay. It didn't look too interesting, and I was already regretting having paid the additional three dollar cover charge.

After everyone was seated, a tall elderly man appeared, dressed in shiny black and white cowboy boots, *Levi* jeans, a bright red shirt, topped-off by an extremely tacky theatrical black and white checkerboard vest, which somewhat matched his boots. Surprisingly, he was holding hands with a large dark skinned orangutan, covered in stringy orange hair. The ape's hand was twice the size of the man's. Both the man and the ape stepped over the hay and the short chicken-wire fence, to stand in the center of the ring, scanning the surrounding

bleachers filled with the spectators.

The ape proceeded to put his right index finger in his right ear, gently rotated it a couple of times, pulled it out, sniffed at his finger tip, then stuck it in his mouth, and gently chewed at the tip, for two or three-seconds. He did this, while he fondly gazed-up at the man in the weird checkered vest. Next, the ape took his finger from his mouth, inserted it into his right nostril, and wiggled it about, for quite some time. He pulled it out, and looked at the fingertip, then pushed-out his lips, and took a taste, and seemed to smile, which made his beady brown eyes seem even closer together. The old guy then began to shout.

“All right you big tough country men, here’s your chance to prove your manhood and make yourself one hundred dollars cash money; that’s one hundred big ones, gentlemen! My little ole monkey here, Albert, was born in Borneo, on the other side of the earth. *That monkey is not that little!* All you’ve got to do is stay in this ring for one measly little minute with little ole Albert, here... to win yourself one hundred smackarulees. No part of your body can go outside of this little chicken-wire fence. (He said this, pointing at the flimsy two-foot fence.) Just touch the

ground or the hay outside the chicken wire and no hundred dollars for you. I offer you this rare opportunity for the meager price of only five dollars. My bet is that my monkey is going to make a monkey out of y'all. It's not too often anyone has bested ole Albert, here, but it does happen every-so-often. *Bullshit, I bet no one ever has.* Remember Albert can't bite or scratch you, cuz we done had the vet remove all his teeth and fingernails. Show the folks, Albert."

At this point, the checker-vested man released the ape, and the ape smiled and displayed a wide toothless impotent smile, while raising-up his hands, so everyone could see there were no fingernails. *That's why he digging at his ears and nose all the time.* Without fingernails, poor Albert probably couldn't finish cleaning his ears, or picking his nose.

"Alright you men; how many of ya'll want to take a shot at Albert, here? Or, are you just too chicken? It's your chance at pocketing one hundred big ones." The man offered.

From the bleachers, a dozen hands quickly shot-up skyward. The owners of those hands looked fiercely determined, with several displaying menacing toothy grins, and flared nostrils. Shouts about what they were going to do to the big orange

ape rang-out.

“That ugly thing won’t be breath’n, when I’m done with him.”

“I’ll kick that stupid monkey’s ass, clean out of the tent.”

“I’m kicking his stink’n hairy ass all the way back to that Borneo, wherever the fuck that jungle is.”

The Lord knows that country boys are often freakishly powerful and fearless fighters. Few, if any, people work as hard as farmers. *I sure don’t want any part of that ape.* I realized that if the guy was giving twenty to one odds, the ape had to be formidable.

The orange haired dark skinned orangutan just gazed at the ground, then sort of poked out his belly, gazed at it, and began to rapidly push his lips in and out. Once again, Albert fruitlessly attempted to pick his nose. The ape was unfazed by the threatening boisterous crowd. *This violent event is plainly ‘old hat,’ for Albert... business as usual!* The severely bow-legged simian stood about four feet in height, but when he raised his hands, I noticed he had an impressively long reach. His arms appeared to be half-again, as long as a man’s. *The ape doesn’t look too strong.* A few minutes later, I would witness how

wrong that assumption had been. Pound for pound, the ape was substantially stronger than any man, and with considerably faster reflexes.

“Gentlemen, this here is a no holds barred contest, meaning anything goes, except that since Albert here can’t scratch or bite, I do ask that none of you fine gentlemen try to bite my ape. He may gum you, but it won’t draw blood. Remember, no teeth. If you bite him, you’ll get no money from me. And a few of my compatriots, here (He threatened this, while pointing at the bouncers.), won’t be none too happy with you, neither. The bouncers all began to nod their agreement. *That means they’ll beat the crap out of, whoever bites this ape.* Besides, all this orange hair won’t taste none too good, and if you bite Albert. I’ll have to spend lots of money at the vets, to get rid of the infection, since Albert’s mouth is probably cleaner than most of you tobacco chewing miscreants. So, I repeat. Do not bite my fucking monkey!” At that point, the Mr. Checkered Vest shook his finger at the spectators.

“If his mouth is so clean, why don’t you go on and kiss him, old man?” One young farmer yelled.

That witticism generated thunderous amounts of laughter. The ape’s owner had all the potential

contestants sit together in a group on some hay bails, just outside the ring, located between a pair of bleachers, where they wouldn't block the view of the other spectators, but they could still see the action. One of the bouncers collected five dollars from each prospective rural combatant. *They've all been drinking so that'll help the ape.*

For the first contestant, Albert's owner selected the smallest guy from the group. Each successive man, he chose, would be the remaining smallest guy, thereby saving the largest man for last. I'm fairly certain it was done like that, because Albert's owner knew that the ape was too much for any man, and if the biggest guy got eliminated early, then the rest of the competitors, as well as the audience, might lose interest. By always having a bigger man entering the ring, people held out hope that Albert could yet be bested. Of course, picking the smallest guy to go first, generated lots of comments.

"Hey monkey man, you pick'n little Davy there, cuz you afraid that ugly toothless fur ball gonna get killed? We don't care what country that stupid monkey comes from. Your monkey is up against West Virginia Mountain men, now. Your ugly fuck'n monkey is in for some real painful trouble, a real first

rate ass whip'n! You best be hope'n there's a monkey hospital nearby, cuz Albert there is gonna be need'n it."

At that point, the exotic Miss Millie and some of the girls, with clothes on (unfortunately), came in the tent and sat-up in the stands. *God, she's hot!* The big ape turned and seemed to momentarily study Miss Millie, perhaps it was her red hair, or something slightly more primitive. I studied Ms. Millie, as well. She spotted me and gave me a brief smile. My bet was Albert had picked her out because of his acute olfaction, and her feminine pheromones. Later, I'd find out that both human and monkey females produce vaginal secretions, containing short chain aliphatic acids. Human and ape pheromones are almost identical, so if human female pheromones are applied to the buttock of a female monkey, it can produce sexual arousal in the male monkey, and Albert sure seemed interested in Ms. Millie. Said pheromones are actually odorless, yet can obviously result in significant neuroendocrine-mediated responses in males, and perhaps in the masculine types of lesbians, since they tend to have an abundance of testosterone receptor in their brains, and their adrenal cortex and ovaries can manufacture

testosterone.

But, pheromones (17 different aliphatic acids) may not only act as sex attractants, but also designed to be a sexual deterrent, to prevent inbreeding. The father's DNA is what gives his daughter her particular concentrations of each type of 17 different short chain aliphatic acids, in essence her pheromonal signature, or her individual olfactory key. Hence, when the daughter ovulates (normally, directly between her periods) and releases her particular pheromonal key, it not only does nothing to arouse her father, but it may actively inhibit his sexual interest, while those same pheromones (that same key) will still produce sexual attraction and arousal in the other unrelated males.

Moreover, if a group of women live in close proximity, as in a dormitory or sorority house, the female who produces the overall greatest concentration of pheromone will not change her menstrual cycle; whereas, the other women may synchronize their menstrual cycles to match-up with hers. That way, all the females may come to simultaneously ovulate, producing said pheromones, which in effect means that a larger pheromone cloud or biochemical 'attractant plume' is produced. This



larger pheromone plumb would have the effect of bringing in more males from greater distances, augmenting the likelihood of greater genetic diversity (new genes), thereby creating the opportunity for stronger more viable (survivable) offspring; especially when it comes to things like: immunity, mating success, enhanced senses, strength, reflexes, etc.

Mother nature, God, or biology, call it what you will, is never boring. So much of human behavior is controlled by odorless molecules, for both males and females. The problem with investigating science is that it usually attracts people, who are exceptionally logical. Though logical thought definitely has its advantages, such people can frequently lack certain aspects of human communication, creativity, and imagination, a critical component of the art of scientific discovery. Consequently, too many logical thinkers may mean less gets accomplished in science, when it comes to pushing back the frontiers of darkness, discovering the unknown. Another example of the role of smell and olfaction in human behavior, is newborn babies. Maternal activity has been demonstrated in the thalamus of females subjects, when they were exposed to the body odor of a newly

born infant. Subsequent analyses indicated that the dopaminergic neostriatal areas of the woman's brain are active during maternal responses, or more accurately stated, maternal responses are literally certain activities in the neostriatal areas. Some studies suggest that body odors from the newborn elicits activation in reward-related cerebral areas, indicating that baby smells may act as a partial catalyst for maternal bonding.

Odd as it may seem, during my later encounter with Miss Millie, I sensed that she possessed a good heart and might have made an excellent mother. Later that evening, sex with her was instantaneous and natural, yet highly exotic, somewhat because of her potent beauty. Afterwards, by the dim light of the small kerosene lantern, while laying with her on the small twin bed, Miss Millie would tell me about her unforgiving father, a very strict, if not cruel and perverted, Baptist preacher. As a young girl, she had been constantly preached to about the evils of sex. Her father had often beaten her for just speaking with boys. By the time I was with her that evening she was fairly inebriated and divulged the fact that she'd noticed that frequently, when her father beat her, there was a pronounced bulge in his trousers,

and that sometimes she'd feel herself becoming turned-on in response to the beating. Perhaps because of her father, she had started sex early in life, and as mentioned, had grown to enjoy objectifying the entire male audience. You know that her dad had made something of a gloomy impression on her, since when discussing her younger years, she'd often refer to herself in the third person. Miss Millie's sexual dam held a voluminous reservoir of neurotransmitter that could have drown the earth. Praise the Lord! At least, that's what she said that her preacher father would often say.

Davy, who was the first brave West Virginia competitor to step into the chicken-wire ring, lasted no more than ten-seconds. After Davy climbed over the hay and into the ring, the old man asked Davy if he was ready. Davy nodded his head, indicating that he was. To me, he looked plenty worried. The old man pulled out a gold pocket watch, and checked the sweeping second hand.

“Go ahead sir, the ape is all yours.” The checkered vest said that, while steeping out of the ring, and over the chicken wire.

For the first two or three-seconds the ape just stared at Davy. Then Albert stuck-out his large lips

and looked back over his shoulder towards his owner, as if to say, “Should I attack?” The owner calmly said, “Take him out, Albert!” Albert looked back at Davy, without the slightest emotion.

Suddenly, with blinding speed the friendly ape rushed the man, who immediately unleashed a fast and vicious round-house bare-knuckle punch, but Davy’s fist barely made it halfway to the target. Albert automatically picked-up on the motion and intercepted the punch, effortlessly grabbing the man’s fist wrist with one of his giant hands, then Albert simply spun the man around, so fast the man was completely taken off guard. The ape easily half hoisted and pushed Davy up and over the chickenwire fence, and he landed on his belly in the soft hay.

“That ape done fucked you, Davy.” A farmer yelled.

After Davy had finished, the owner stepped back into the ring, and the ape waddled back to him, to again gently hold his hand, gaze up at him with his tiny innocent dark button eyes. Yet again, Albert attempted to pick his nose with his nailless index finger. The animal had been exceptionally fast and amazingly strong. Humans may have evolved in the

brain department, but the primate has by far the better speed and strength. Nevertheless, that gentle monkey may also have had more love and affection. Throughout the brutal, and somewhat humorous matches, the ape never appeared to be even slightly angry. That couldn't be said for most of the human competitors. Albert just remained focused on lifting, grabbing, throwing, pushing, and shoving the competitors out of the little ring, and at times he seemed almost apologetic. Between matches, the great ape would invariably insert his finger into his nose and ears. The poor toothless and nailless ape, whose spirit and body was designed for the peaceful quietude of the beautiful green forests of distant Borneo, was in a totally unnatural environment; nevertheless, he behaved with matchless grace and dignity.

The big friendly orange creature had made each contender look almost childlike, and though he'd absorbed several vicious kicks and punches to his head and body, Albert only occasionally screamed, yet never attempted to bite, scratch, or hit his contestant. He only grabbed, wrestled, pushed, or threw his opponents, using his speed, ultra long reach, and formidable strength. The orangutan didn't

appear to know how to punch, but he did occasionally use his hand and forearm like ungainly club. Albert easily discharged each and every competitor. Some guys kicked, some punched, and one tried to use-up the sixty-seconds by running away from the ape. While they were extremely strong men, it was clear that no one was a significant challenge for Albert. Later that night in the warm glow of the lantern, Ms. Millie would tell me that if there were a man, with Albert's disposition, she'd worship him. And that comment lead to her making some rather untimely comments while we were having sex, talking about religion and her job in the same breath. Perhaps, the comments were owing to the fact her dad was a preacher.

“I sure as hell don't worship those man-made Gods, they want everyone to bow-down to. All those crazy religions were only made to control people, but especially us women, so I only worship the goodness as I see it, also I'm the only girl here, who gets to pick and choose her customers, even a fifteen year old. I don't allow the bosses to run me, especially not some person, who has the audacity to claim that they are the son of a god. What a load of bullshit. The bosses here know that I really enjoy my work, but

they also know I can walk away, whenever I want.” Millie proclaimed these things, as I laid on my back, and she straddled me; all the while, never slowing her steady rhythm, while gazing into my eyes, and soaking the mattress. After the first time, strange as it may seem, the five minutes of silent stillness, when she laid with me and I gently held her, waiting for round two, was as memorable as was the sex. There was only her warmth, the country music, coming from the big tent, and the warm flicker of a kerosene lantern.

After the last and biggest contestant had been finally and firmly shoved over the chickenwire, and it looked like the monkey show was finished, but that’s when two of the guys, who’d already lost to Albert, unexpectedly jumped back in the ring to speak with the man in the checkered vest. Everyone watched and wondered what was transpiring. During the little pow-wow, Albert’s owner kept his right index finger extended straight-up in the air, signaling the crowd, to hang-on. Meanwhile, Albert had again put his right index finger back in his ear, then he pulled it out, and shook his head from side to side, while his lips were pushed out. *Maybe Albert has an earache.* We all just sat and waited to find-out what

the three men were discussing. After the brief conference, the owner of the ape made an unexpected, yet interesting announcement.

“Well, folks it ain’t over just yet. Looks like we have a real special treat for y’all, tonight... something brand new! Ya see.... these two fine gentlemen are each pay’n me forty dollars, that’s a sum of eighty dollars, for the unique opportunity of getting in the ring with Albert, here. They’ll both be get’n in together... two men against good ole Albert! That’s right gentlemen... both men at the same time! Albert will be doin battle with these two men, at the same time! Whatever man is still in the ring after one minute will receive one hundred dollars, so I could be handing over two hundred dollars, if my ape loses this here contest! But I’ll be pocketing eighty dollars, when Albert dispatches these fellows. It’s an honor to have these two men here, tonight, since these honorable men are members of our fine armed services. This one here is a member of that new group called the *Green Berets*. And, this other fella here is with the good ole *United States Marine Corps*. Let’s give em both a big hand, folks. No matter how this comes out, I guarantee it’s gonna be exciting!”  
*No shit!*



At that time, the Green Berets of the *United States Army Special Forces* had only been in existence for two years, but were constantly being talked about, especially in the military circles. Some of the farmers appeared uncertain about what a Green Beret was. In 1961, president Kennedy was visiting Fort Bragg, when he asked Brigadier General Yarborough to make sure that the men wore green berets for the visit, and sent a memo the same day, which included something like...

“I am sure that the green beret will be a mark of distinction in the trying times ahead.”

At first, the wearing of the berets caused a big ruckus in the military. Most of the ruckus revolved around two things. The berets broke with American military tradition, and some folks simply don't like change. The other factor was that many people in the military didn't care for President Kennedy, and so anything, which he did, was subject to negative criticism. Kennedy was a Democrat, and most of the more hawkish people are Republicans. Lots of people hated Kennedy for pulling back the air cover, during the failed 'Bay of Pigs' invasion. No doubt that had been a big mistake. Then again, he did stand-up to the Russians, with the Cuban missile crisis, and Lord

knows that took balls, since Nikita Khrushchev was something of a lunatic with his finger on a shitload of nukes.

With the announcement that the orangutang was entering into an untested realm, the audience, including myself, went ape (pun intended). We were all yelling and clapping, with each of us firmly in support of our service men, and glad to see that the action wasn't over yet, but that it was instead about to double in intensity. The question loomed large in all our minds. Can the ape handle two big tough men, simultaneously? The farmers were making lots of side bets on the possible outcomes of the match: two men win, one man wins (Green Beret or US Marine), or the ape wins completely.

Correspondingly, I bet Phillip fifty cents, that the two men would beat the ape, and both be left in the ring at the end of sixty-seconds. Phillip bet that the ape would throw both men out of the ring. The two military men briefly talked and appeared to be working out some kind of strategy, entering from opposite sides, and the old guy with the checkered vest quickly shouted.

“Begin!”

Immediately, the ringmaster checked his pocket

watch, as we all checked the secondhand on our wrist watches. The fact that two men had entered the ring on opposite sides seemed to unnerve the ape. Albert looked confused and began to scream, so the owner wasted no time in shouting.

“Take em out, Albert! Take em out, now!” He loudly commanded.

The fact that the checkered vest man had shouted loudly also served to psychologically jar the ape. It seemed that Albert was desperately frightened by this unique circumstance of the two men. The ape was plainly facing a novel situation. At first, the Albert looked to be trying to decide, which man to go after. This proved to produce a precious ten-second delay in the ape’s initial response, so Albert’s owner became noticeably worried, and again he shouted for the ape to take em out.

When the ape finally decided to go for the Marine, the Green Beret instantly charged in, which further served to unnerve Albert. Now the discombobulated ape suddenly stopped his rush for the Marine to counter the on-coming Green Beret. But as Albert turned to confront the Green Beret, the Marine leaped in and latched onto Albert’s left arm and wrist with both his hands, and before Albert

could reach over with his right hand to free his left, the Green Beret had control of Albert's right arm and wrist. This caused the ape to again scream loudly. The ape's ear splitting scream was impressive. Until that moment, the ape had only made gentle hooting sounds.

The two big men immediately began pulling backwards, like a tug-a-war, using poor Albert's arms as the rope. But try as they might, they were unable to fully stretch out the ape. A small amount of bend remained in each of Albert's elbows. At that point, both the ape and his owner were in crisis. The length of the ape's nearly outstretched arms was striking, and almost the width of the small ring. At that point, the US Marine yelled, "We got you now, you smelly monkey!" Again, Albert then let-out another loud shriek, while the men were digging their heels into the grass and dirt floor of the arena, and leaning backward, pulling with all their might, running critical seconds off the clock.

The secondhand of my watch showed that thirty-seconds had passed. The men were halfway home and I imagined Phillip handing me fifty cents. The ape's owner looked desperate, his eyes wide open, and his hands clenched in fists. It was easy to tell he

was not accustomed to losing, and it looked like he was about to be handing over two hundred bucks. To win, the two men only needed to continue holding the ape for thirty more seconds, and I'd also win my fifty cents from Phillip.

The owner was panicking, so he bellowed at the top of his lungs, "Take em out, Albert!" The magnitude of the shout plainly registered with the ape, for suddenly, Albert developed a new rather intelligent strategy. First, Albert pulled only the Marine, while leaning slightly toward the Green Beret. Once Albert had gotten the Marine to come forward slightly, the ape then used all the slack to suddenly give-way, and lunge for the Marine, which caused the Marine to fall backwards, the force of which Albert used to suddenly yank the Green Beret closer to him. The ape then suddenly switched his direction of pull; this time allowed the Green Beret to fall backward, and Albert then used that backward momentum and his added strength to better help him to pull the Marine, then Albert would switch his pull to let the Marine fall backward and use the momentum to better pull the Green Beret. This lightning-fast switching of direction-of-pull technique proved effective. Each time the ape did this, he

gained ground, but time was fast running-out. Albert was no longer stretched-out. Without missing a beat, the ape continued to quickly switch his direction of pull, each time using the momentum of one contestant to better pull the other. A rhythmical side-to-side seesawing motion was established. And with every oscillation, Albert got each man a little closer. Till finally, after about six such fast oscillations, toothless Albert was within biting range of the Green Beret. Only twelve-seconds remained!

When Albert clamped down on the Green Beret's wrist with his massive toothless jaws, the shear pressure of the enormous jaws, even without the teeth, was enough to make the Green Beret cry-out and release his grip on Albert's right wrist. Then as fast as light, Albert with his right hand freed, focused all of his attention on the Marine, driving the Marine backwards, and over the chicken wire fence. The Marine sat down hard on his butt, and out of the game.

With only seven-seconds remaining, Albert turned on the Green Beret, but as he did, the soldier had anticipated Albert's attack and quickly planted a devastating heel kick, dead in Albert's big pie-shaped face. Only four-seconds were left on my watch.

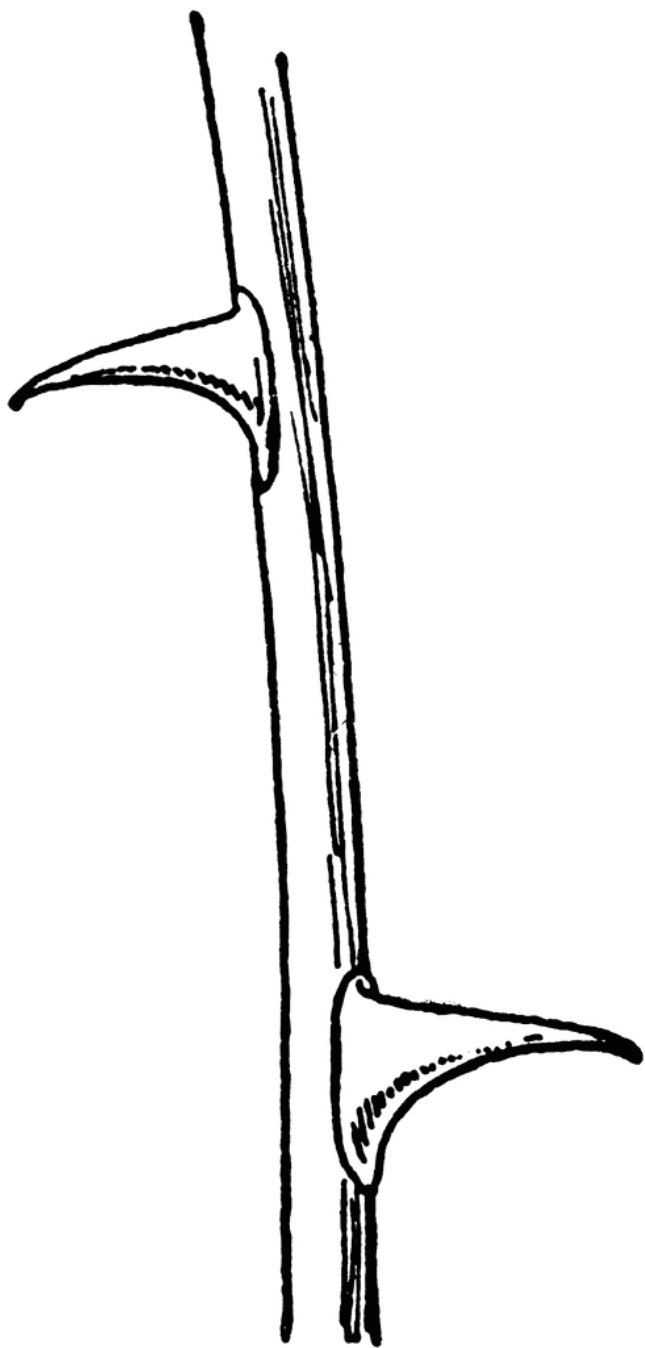
Judging from the power of the kick, I figured the animal was done-for. A kick such as that would have definitely knocked-out a man, but while Albert went down hard on his back, surprisingly, he sprang back-up like a striking rattlesnake. The kick seemed to have actually inspired the animal to ramp-up the speed of his performance. The Green Beret was completely overwhelmed by the speed of Albert's recovery, and like the Marine, he was shoved over the fence. And for just a fraction of a second, I saw hate flash across Albert's face.

The owner of the ape explosively bellowed, "Time," marking his watch. Obviously, we all had checked our wristwatches, simultaneously. Albert had barely dispatched both men, with one-second to spare. What a battle! We were on our feet applauding and cheering for both the men, as well as for the big friendly orange ape. The ape was breathing hard and a small trickle of blood protruded from his left nostril; nevertheless, this time, the ape didn't try to pick his nose. Albert had made his living the hard way, that time. But other than the bloody nose, the ape seemed okay. Most likely, *PETA* wouldn't agree. After reaching in my pocket, I handed-over a silver fifty cent piece to Phillip.

Albert raised his large nailless hands, widely opened his small beady black eyes, and smiled his toothless victory smile, then he used three adjacent finger-tips to wipe the blood from under his nose, looked at the blood on his red finger, then carefully tasted the blood, and let go with a solemn ‘hoot.’ Even the two conquered servicemen, albeit breathing like runaway locomotives, were smiling and laughing. About ten years later, the movie *Every Which Way but Loose* would be released. It contained a scene similar to what I’d seen in the tent, only the film used an orangutan, named Clyde. Moreover, the orangutan in the movie wasn’t as large as was Albert. It seems there was even a country song with the same title. My bet was, that at some time, the writer of that movie, or the song, had been to West Virginia and witnessed Albert in action. In fact, he might have been there the same night as I’d been there. And, if he were extremely lucky, he might have also experienced the erotic Miss Millie. To the best of my knowledge, no one has made a movie about the erotic Miss Millie, and considering her amazing orgasmic stage performance, her powerful love of sex, and her pious upbringing, somewhere amongst all that there has to be a story worthy of a true writer’s attention.



All of us went back to the coot show tent, for more drinking, etc., but most especially, for the ‘etc.’ The Marine and the Green Beret never paid for a single drink, or for a woman that evening. We all chipped in. All things considered, I was more than grateful that Phillip had suggested stopping by the drugstore. There was no *HIV* back then, but still, there were several unpleasant strains of gonorrhea, making their way around the East coast, and the STD was alleged to be as common as the common cold, back then. At least that’s what they’d told us in school. Moreover, later there were all these stories about American GIs, who weren’t allowed to return from Vietnam, due to contracting incurable gonorrhea! That questionable story was probably used as a terror tactic, but that along with Dad’s single lecture right after I’d meant Anna, had worked well on my paranoid young psyche.



## HUBCAP

Having returned from Spain, I pleasantly discovered that America had acquired colored television, and although at the time, they seemed to be impressive, the shows weren't nearly as interesting, nor as well done, as they are today. In August 1950, a guy named, Baird gave the world's first demonstration of an electronic color television display. Although, it was not until the early 1970s that color television in the US outsold black and white units. It's difficult to say, who invented of the color TV, but a Hungarian (possibly a Jew) engineer named, Peter Carl Goldmark, as well as some folks at *NBC*, may deserve the loin's share of the credit. Back then, there were only three channels, but that was better than the one black and white channel we had, before I'd gone to Spain. Though I prefer color to black and white, there is something to be said for monochrome. Large areas of the brain must be used to process color vision. Looking at pretty colors is a huge energy drain on the brain, so watching a show in monochrome may give the viewer more cerebral energy to devote to cognitive consideration and evaluation of the show. Perchance, that is why more

than 13,000 people in the UK, still prefer monochrome TV. For me, it is easier to discern people's emotions when viewed in black and white.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/jan/10/black-and-white-tv-13000-homes>

Back then, TV comedy shows generally weren't too witty, as substantiated by their heavy reliance on the irritating repetitious 'canned' laughter. I've always found canned laughter to be psychologically disturbing. It's like the producer is trying to tell the listener what's supposed to be funny, as if he or she isn't capable of realizing what's funny for themselves. Now days, the best comedians are usually brilliant men, who too frequently burn brightly, fueled by their obvious abuses of stimulate drugs, i.e., cocaine, methamphetamine, etc. While the drugs slowly turn them into ash, we get to enjoy their peerless bright humor. How strange it must be to realize that you're sacrificing your cognition, sanity, and overall health, so large numbers of people laugh.

Humor in the early 1960s was pretty much confined to one or two liners, then the canned laughter

machine would be turned on for about four to five-seconds, then another one or two liner would be delivered, followed by more maddening canned laughter. Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Jacky Gleason, etc. were somewhat like that. Sometimes this procedure went on and on, ad nauseam, for an entire thirty minute show. Frequently, I felt I could sense that the very same recorded 'canned' laughter was used on different shows. Most of the jokes were much cleaner back then... no massive amounts of cursing, no raw sex, as so much humor now relies on.

Moreover back then, the special effects in the movies were of pretty crappy, relying heavily on poorly painted aerial or landscape backdrop scenes, poorly made monster costumes, and juvenile plastic and wooden models of: monsters, planes, trains, buildings, tanks, and ships. The ship models would be plainly splashing about in some big metal tub, with the edge of the tub being just outside the camera's field of view. The small waves which were supposed to be large, invariably moved too fast. Furthermore, plot lines lacked originality, regularly making obvious attempts at mimicking the ideas and machinations of classic novels, plays, and often the Bible. In those days, anything too original or

different was looked at as being foolish or presumptuous. People would have thought that Quentin Tarantino was an absolute idiot.

When I was fifteen, we didn't have big shopping malls, the internet, wireless phones (much less cellphones), nor computers and certainly not video games. Instead of malls, we had privately owned businesses and stores owned by families. Instead of the internet, we used the library. And, instead of video games, we largely relied on playing sports, or we designed our own types of fun/entertainment. At night, we did our homework, usually with our parents supervising. If there was no homework, we'd go outside to play. Play usually meant either sledding, if it was winter and there was snow and ice. In warmer weather, there was basketball, football, or baseball, but often it was dark by the time our homework was finished, and we didn't have any lighted fields or courts, so we were forced to improvise. We dreamed-up some pretty foolish stuff. Our brains never seems to run out of foolishness.

In the early 1960s, there was no sitting down and following some preplanned video game scenario. Lately, I've begun to wonder what hours of daily video gaming might do to a young developing brain,

since a computer screen is only two dimensional, and it's at a fixed focal distance. The game in no way contributes to the development of the brain's depth-perception, and doesn't require the eye to focus as it does in the real world, no need to track a target through 180 degrees of visual field, nor the need to swivel the head for a target moving outside the visual field (the monitor's screen). Moreover, the sense of balance (the vestibular system) is hardly used. Other than using hands and wrists, a video game requires little use of the body's skeletal muscles. In a very serious way, the gamer allows his or her character's body to get all the exercise, and so huge amounts of the gamer's physiology remains unused! Besides, parts of the game are often highly repetitious, hence they represent little to nothing in the way of an intellectual challenge, with almost no need for individual creativity. Maybe life is better that way, with nothing being too challenging, unexpected, and nothing truly dangerous... heaven forbid. In a way, holy books are a bit like a video game.

In many respects, playing a video game is like singing the same song over and over, occasionally changing the octave or the tempo, yet always trying

to sing it better. Nevertheless, it's still just singing the same song. It reminds me of a rock and roll band, playing the same hit song, over and over and over, and the poor guitarist, drummer, or singer, must pretend, with each repetition that he or she is really into the redundant song! For a few years, I'd played the organ. After playing a particular piece a few times, it was time to learn a new one, or to begin to severely modify the structure of the original. Once I'd learned a song, I had no more interest in it.

Nothing fatigues a hyper kid like pointless repetition. Often times, to perfect a song was extremely boring, for when you finally get it right, that's all you would have done, only perfected a piece. To get beyond such tedium you have to begin to write music, but how many video game players will ever create the games? Oft times, just before I'd get a song perfected, I was ready to move on to a new song. Only the aforementioned sanctum of sexuality, the previously mentioned, *Septal Nucleus* can enjoy repetitive stimulation, and Lords knows it does. But even then, and perhaps speaking for most males, the brain does so love variety of sexual partners... a fairly unromantic reality; and of course, some women are that way, as well.



But like I said, back then, there were no video games, television programs weren't nearly as interesting, and the internet was yet to be created, so the parts of our brains which: perceived the third dimension, controlled variable distance focusing (near to far, and far to near), created skeletal muscle coordination and balance, conducted social interaction, and generated creative thought, were conceivably more apt to be used. Many world records in the world of athletics have stood unchanged for twenty years or longer. In many events, some sports fanatics feel that the top performers have already reached the limits of human physiology; on the other hand, fewer and fewer kids appear to be interested in athletics, perhaps owing to video gaming.

Today's video gamers depend on the creativity of the game designers, the script writer, the graphic artists, the hardware engineers, and the software programmers. The player's input is relatively minimal, if not insignificant, except to gauge future sales. But too many of the hordes of gamers, are now growing-up, without actually creating... anything. Video gaming is a bit like leading a scripted life, not too different from working on an assembly line, but without getting paid, but instead paying for the

privilege. Games and gaming platforms are not cheap. Over millions of years, the three pounds of gray mush, has evolved to be a social creature, and video gaming is anything but true social endeavor.

Sure you can have multiple players on certain video games, but there again, everyone's behavior is largely being heavily influenced, if not scripted, by the game. Because of these things, it seems that excessive video gaming might deprive the gamer of proper neurophysiological development and lead to depression. Again, with most video games, the gamer simply follows or operates within a limited set of possibilities, routines, subroutines, parameters, commands, and remains completely uncreative, with the eye focused at a fixed distance, large masses of skeletal muscle not being used, very little use of the vestibular system, and the gamer's brain being a slave to the imagination of software designers. In the early 1960s, we were not transfixed, for hours on end in the two dimensional world, unless it was reading. Admittedly, computers have their advantages, but how they influence a young person's developing gray goop and body may have a few very disturbing negatives.

My bet is that in the next few decades, the

proctologists (i.e., hemorrhoids, and constipation from lack of exercise), optometrists (i.e., myopia), and the psychologists (i.e., depression) are going to see a boom in business. Moreover, medical supply companies are going to get rich, because, when these kids get old, there's going to be a huge number using canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, since they'll be suffering with under developed musculature and attenuated vestibular systems. Videos games may also have a fuck ton to do with why there is now an epidemic of diabetes and obesity, for there is practically no physical exercise, playing a video game. At least the sedentary game of chess provides some imagination, creativity, and requires some concerted cognitive effort. But when it's all said and done, for decent brain development, you've got to get out there and mingle, think, and move. Life is the only real game... the only game where all the chips are on the line.

Another disturbing question is... could the developing brain of a young computer geek develop in such a way, that he or she prefers online porn, over the actual pressing of the flesh, with all it's amazing tactile sensations and genuine heart pounding emotions. After all, the real or natural

thing involves reciprocal touch sensitivity, delicate yet powerful forms of psychophysiology, subtle and not so subtle conscious and subconscious communication, creativity, pheromones, not to mention the all important actual third dimension, none of which occur appreciatively, when cruising online porn.

On the other hand, I must admit that online sex is absolutely free of all pernicious biological pathogens: *HIV*, gonorrhea, herpes, human papilloma virus, chancroid, hepatitis, trichomoniasis, chlamydia, syphilis, etc. The potential for exposure to these pathogens, which can clearly damage health, is no doubt stressful, and may act to reduce a person's actual appreciation of sex, rendering the actual sex act less thrilling. Consequently, safe sexual practices not only protect individuals from the physical ravages of disease, but from the collateral anxiety and attenuation of sexual enjoyment. Another positive aspect of online sex is that a young man can't literally rape someone online. In addition, the computer doesn't produce unwanted physical relationships/attachments, nor any worry about pregnancies. Consequently, the internet and video games may create a significant change in the

distribution of the world's offspring. Computer-oriented people may be less apt to be sexually engaging, and so, not as apt to produce offspring; whereas those folks, who don't frequent their computer as much, may produce the majority of new offspring.

Who would you think is most apt to create more children, those who spend significant amounts of their life at the computer playing video games and surfing the web, or the people who can't afford to purchase a computer or don't enjoy computers, and therefore are more apt to interact/interface with people? This phenomenon may give rise to a major split in the human populace: an increase in those individuals with personality traits which render them less likely to enjoy extensive computer use, and a reduction in those peoples, who enjoy video gaming and online surfing.

In an odd, yet somewhat authentic, way, the computer acts as a surrogate brain, an extension of one's own gray goop; but alas, it's only for certain parts of the gray goop, at the sacrifice of the development of portions of the gray mush. Some people enjoy that limited (albeit considerable) electronic extension of their cognition, where others

either don't enjoy it, or lack the cognitive ability to genuinely enjoy it. Perchance, the video games and the internet use, for all its benefits, may be creating the next important step in the evolution or de-evolution (depending on how you look at it) of our specie. The video gamer and internet surfer might only be a provisional branch in human evolution, because of a corresponding reduction in their rate of sexual reproduction. In addition, the non-gamers and non-internet surfers might get more exercise, and therefore be healthier, more likely to be physically appealing, certainly more socially interactive, sexually active, and therefore more apt to procreate. Since many neurological attributes are passed on, via the genes, it is quite possible, the offspring could also have, up to a point, similar cognitive attributes as their non-computer using parent.

Having said these things in blatant criticism of computer use, I must confess that many of the games which we dreamed-up as kids, didn't have much in the way of practical value. In fact, often they were a huge waste of time, or worse, they were dangerous. A great example of such a useless game was dreamed-up by one of my friends, Max (nicknamed, Max the Maniac). He named the game, 'hubcap.'

Back then, almost all the automobiles had shiny decorative hubcaps, and they weren't terribly cheap. Consequently, no one liked losing one of their hubcaps. If you found a hubcap, you could sell it at a junkyard or gas station, for a buck or two, depending on how fancy it was, and buck was worth something, back then. A buck was nearly an ounce of silver. While now a loaf of low quality bread is roughly two or three dollars, back then a loaf of high quality bread was ten cents. Day old bread was either throwout or sold for a penny, now it goes for fifty cents. Frequently, gas stations and junkyards had hundreds, if not thousands of used hubcaps, for motorists to select from.

The only equipment required to play hubcap, was a plain used hubcap. The object of the game was merely to see how frustrated we could make some unsuspecting male motorist. We always played it, during the cover of darkness, making it more difficult for the driver to identify the hubcap as not being theirs, as well as making it harder for the driver to discern our identity. You wanted the driver to assume that the hubcap was actually his hubcap, and that it had just popped off his car. And certainly, you didn't want the driver to recognize you, and file a

police report.

Chivalrously, we only picked on men, never on a woman. If we found that we'd accidentally selected a woman, we'd just stop the game, leave the hubcap, and walk away. We'd all been brought-up to respect the fairer sex. Moreover, if by accident, we'd selected a man, who appeared to be over the age of sixty, again we simply stopped the game, left the hubcap and walked away. None of us wanted to give some older gentleman a heart attack.

In those days, we didn't have *YouTube*; otherwise, I suspect the video taping and posting of the game would have probably gotten a goodly number of hits, especially considering the magnitude of the emotional reaction, we often elicited from our victims. It appears that this game doesn't now exists on *YouTube*, or anywhere on the internet. Now days, the slightly sadistic game would certainly be considered illegal, so please understand that I am by no means advocating that anyone play the game. If for no other reason, it involves car theft, albeit said theft only lasted for a few seconds. Now days, the police wouldn't begin to have a sense of humor, about any car theft, even if it was exceedingly brief and merely meant as a joke. Besides, most cars no



longer have hubcaps.

Each night, before beginning the game, we'd select a stretch of dark road, with plenty of bushes or trees, along its sides. One of us, designated 'the pitcher,' would hide behind a tree or a bush, so as to be next to the road but concealed from the eyes of the approaching motorist. The rest of the game's participants would hide a little further down the road. We'd pick a road with minimal traffic, and only play the game, when there was a single car coming. If more than one car was coming, regardless of the direction, we didn't commence the game. Everyone took turns being the pitcher. Only the pitcher ran a significant risk, and only once did things go bad. However, the one time it went bad, it turned-out to be a real nightmare, and I was the pitcher.

The way the game worked was that as the lone car was about to pass, the hidden pitcher, from his hiding spot, he'd would sail the hubcap like a frisbee, right down next to the road's surface, so that it slid underneath the passing car. This was relatively easy to do. You just had to lead the car a bit. Usually once the big metal hubcap was under the car, it would bang and clang, then go rolling off making the unmistakeable metallic singing sound of a lost

hubcap.

Hearing that unmistakable metallic sound, the driver would automatically assume that he'd just lost one of his hubcaps, and depending on the speed of the car and his reaction time, he'd generally stop about thirty to fifty yards down the road, pull over, and get out of his auto to walk back and retrieve his lost hubcap. That's when the pitcher would come casually strolling out from behind his hide, and step out onto the dark section of road, pretending not to notice the driver. The pitcher would then pick-up the hubcap, and loudly proclaim his discovery, in mock surprise.

“Wow, a hubcap!”

At this point, the driver would invariably yell at the pitcher.

“Hey kid, hold on there. That's my hubcap, you got there!”

The pitcher would then simply pretend not to have heard the driver, stand there for a few seconds continuing to examine the new found hubcap, and once it was clear that the driver was coming his way, the pitcher would start to slowly walk away, with the hubcap in hand. If the driver continued to walk faster

or run after the pitcher, the pitcher would begin to slowly jog, baiting the driver to chase him. The also caused the driver to abandon his car. Once the driver was well away from his car, the pitcher would gradually pour on more speed, and just run away, leaving the driver wondering, if he should really commit to the prolonged and exhausting chase over a relatively insignificant hubcap, while leaving his running car on the side of the road. Sometimes the driver wouldn't leave his car, and the game had failed. In fact, about eighty percent of the time, the game failed and the driver would just forfeit the hubcap.

Of course, it wasn't his hubcap, and he'd really lost nothing, only a drop or two of sweat. But, the other twenty percent of the time, if the irate driver did give chase, or had walked far enough away from his car, the other kids in hiding, and wearing gloves, so as to leave no fingerprints, would sprint out of hiding, and then jump into the still running automobile, yelling about their happy discovery.

“Oh look, somebody left a car running here! Oh, boy! Let's take it for a spin.”

Slamming the car doors, and they'd sit in the car gunning the engine, which had the desired effect of

making the driver quickly forget about the relatively insignificant hubcap, turn back around, and run for his car. Whichever of us was driving the car would wait, until the frustrated driver was within about ten feet of the car, then stomp the accelerator and zoom away, leaving the frustrated driver standing alone and angry on the dark road. At that point, the poor driver would routinely begin to scream colorful phrases, and often act slightly deranged.

“Hey... stop you little fuckers! That’s my fucking car! Come back! I’m calling the police! You hear me? Fuck you! Wait till I get my hands on you assholes!” The poor driver might yell.

To play this game, we only had to be able to quickly locate and release the emergency brake, and if need be, to drive a manual transmission. The driver couldn’t quickly call the police, because there were no cellphones at that time, and we never conducted the game near a pay-phone. Besides, if we took the car, we’d only drive a hundred yards, pull off the road, turnoff the engine, leave the keys in the ignition, get out and run away laughing... no harm no foul, just a bit of dark humor.

Sometimes, if the driver kept running after his fleeing car, whomever was driving would slow down

for a period, baiting the driver to run a little further. There was no need to worry about being identified by some crime scene investigator looking for hair or fibers, back then. And as mentioned, everyone wore gloves. And, in 1963 there weren't any cameras on the streets.

In reality nothing was stolen... not the car, and not even the hubcap. Now days, law enforcement has become much more stringent, ergo a prank like that would now culminate in grand theft auto charges for all involved, with the associated bail money, attorney fees, fines, court costs, probation costs, possible prison sentences, etc. Criminal prosecution is now a big business, as are all those corporately run prisons. As mentioned, America locks-up more of its citizens, per capita, than any other country on earth. That sad fact may say fuck ton about our current government, and its' need to control the voting populace.

But as mentioned, one evening things didn't work out as planned. It was my turn to be the pitcher, and right from the jump, everything went horribly wrong. I'd made a great toss, skimming the hubcap right under the car, and it made all the expected sounds. As usual, the driver stopped and

pulled off the road after traveling about forty yards. Leaving his engine running, he got out of his car. I then walked out on the road, proclaiming, “Wow, a hubcap!” Like the drivers of the past, while standing next to his open door, the driver loudly shouted.

“Hey, that’s mine, kid. Hold it right there! Hold it right there sonny; that’s my hubcap! Stop!”

Proceeding with the plan, I slowly picked-up the hubcap, and began to amble away, with the hubcap under my arm, failing to acknowledge the driver, as if I were drunk or perhaps severely hearing impaired. But then, this particular driver was not your average run-of-the-mill guy. He appeared to be an extremely big man, thickly muscled, but tall and rangy. He looked to be in his mid twenties, a good ten years my senior. I noted that his initial athletic acceleration, from standing by his car, was exceptionally impressive, so I skipped the jogging, and went right into a full blown sprint. After a couple seconds, out came my friends, joyously yelling about his abandoned car, as they climbed-in, gunned the engine, and proceeded to drive away. Right then, the driver just yelled, “Oh... no fucking way! Come here, you asshole!” He was screaming at me. For some reason, the powerful man immediately figured-out

that I was involved in the theft of his car; that it was all just a set-up to steal his car, ergo he just kept sprinting in my direction, at an uncanny rate of speed, completely ignoring the fact that his expensive Mercedes had been stolen. Shit! *This guy runs like an olympic medallist. This is not supposed to happen!* Never had I seen someone cover ground like that brawny lanky monster. He was pouring on the coals, and so I quickly realized I was vastly outclassed.

According to how the game had previously worked, the driver should have then been chasing his car, not me, but the loss of his car only fueled the man's sprint in my direction. Judging from his massive size, and the speed at which he was closing the distance between us, I figured the speedster was a running back for the *NFL*. I realized that if this guy caught me, he wasn't going to care if about the hubcap, and I was going to have a serious fight on my hands.

My sympathetic nervous system had fully rigged for danger. Adrenaline began to flow and I put on speed, sprinting for all I was worth, but because I was in an unfamiliar neighborhood, and it was pitch black at night, I wasn't exactly sure where to run, nor was I too certain of my footing. The reason we were

in an unknown neighborhood, was that we often had to switch locations, since the cops would get wise to us. Twice we'd run from the cops, barely managing to get away, both times. As the big athletic man continued to close the ground, I heard him shout a rather friendly greeting.

"I'm gonna kick you're fucking ass, kid." *This guy is way above my weight class.*

Darting off the road, where there were no lights, and it became extremely hard to see, my steps became less certain, but I was hoping it was also doing the same to the enraged giant, not twenty feet behind me. I felt that at any second, I was going to fall, having already stepped in a shallow depression in the ground, and slightly staggered. The massive guy had me by a good sixty pounds of solid muscle. Quickly glancing back, I saw that I was losing the race. Then shockingly, the driver had closed within ten feet, and he didn't seem to be running out of wind. *Jesus, this guy is fast!* At that point, I purposely dropped the hubcap behind me and into his path, but he just kept on sprinting. *He wants that pound of flesh!*

It was then, that desperation drove me to make a uniquely bad decision. Just ahead and off to the right in an extremely dark area, I could vaguely make out



a low three foot brick wall. Impulsively, I ran to and leaped that short wall, praying that the thundering giant might just trip over the low wall, or lose his footing, coming down on the other side. It wasn't exactly a clever idea, but it was the only card I had left to play, and there was no bluffing in this game. *If this wall doesn't do the trick, it's going to be a bad fight, and way above my weight class.* Sailing smoothly over the wall, I immediately was anticipating my landing, hopelessly searching for, the ground and sound footing on the other side. I was desperately determined not to stumble and fall. But once over the wall, there was literally no ground on the other side! *There's no damn ground! Shit!* Unexpectedly, I was falling through the pitch black, and heard a grunt, as the giant jumped over the wall, a half second behind me. Both of us plunged-down about twelve feet. Falling through pitch blackness; the blind twelve foot drop seemed like a mile. I had gotten my feet positioned below me for the anticipated impact, but never hit the ground, at least not for about another thirty minutes!

Nevertheless, I had suddenly stopped falling, finding myself painfully snared in an immense mass of burly thick rose vines, complete with monstrously

large and very sharp angry thorns. My body hung suspended, about nine feet above the ground. From the top of the wall to the ground was a distance of just over twenty feet. Some of the thorns driven into various parts of my body were over an inch and a half in length; their ovoid base about a half inch wide. And some of the vines were two inches thick. These were the rose vines from hell; the largest rose bushes, I've ever encountered. A quarter of a second later, the giant track star crashed-down into the vines, four feet off to my right.

“Mother fucker this shit hurts! What the fuck is this shit?” The giant painfully exploded!

“I think we're landed in some giant Rose bushes! The more you try to move, the worse it seems to get.” I weakly answered.

The pain of the thorny snare was light years beyond unbearable, and moving even a little bit made the agony worse. Of course, this made me recall my falling into the cactus patch in Spain. Both of us were impaled by hundreds of large painful thorns. Unlike the time I fallen in the cactuses, roughly three years prior, I didn't pass-out. Our bodies were completely suspended in the steely thorns. This situation was something that Dante

should have included in his *Purgatorio*. Heck, Jesus only had the crown of thorns and three big nails, whereas the big angry dude and I had received the full body treatment. While, I realized that I deserved the misery, the giant muscle-bound guy next to me was completely innocent, albeit something told me that he was a bit of a mean asshole.

Moving any part of my body was meant with feral pain. The thorns seemed to be constantly sinking deeper into my flesh, owing to gravity. We both just hung there in an inescapable web of torment, breathing hard from our foot-race. The giant kept screaming the word, “Fuck.” I kept yelling, “Shit,” while trickles of blood ran over portions of my arms, legs, neck and torso. For a little while, that was the full extent of our expressive vocabularies, then for a minute, we said nothing, and just hung suspended in the spiky vines, breathing hard, and bleeding.

Still hanging there with no hope of escape, the giant finally said, “I know you and your friends stole my car and I figured out too late that the hubcap thing was some kind of trick, wasn’t it?”

Feeling like a complete idiot, I explained the game of hubcap. Then, I told him that we only drove

the car a couple hundred feet, just to piss-off the driver, and that his car was still there.

“You kids actually do that stupid shit for fun? Are you fuck’n nuts?” The giant was far more than slightly incensed.

“Generally, it’s pretty funny, but not so much this time.” I explained.

“No shit, you dumb-ass kid. Damn these fucking thorns really hurt.” The giant exclaimed.

“You weren’t supposed to have chased me this far!”

“Fuck you! Jesus, this hurts! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!” The giant screamed.

“You run like a fucking Olympic track star. What do you do for a living... play some kind of sport?”

“Two years ago, I ran the 400 meters in the Pan Am games... came in fourth in the world, but I’ve gotten too big, cuz I started power lifting... got too much muscle for track and field, now. So, I’m thinking about trying-out for the *NLF*... maybe doing a walk-on with the *Saints*... for a running-back position.”

*No wonder he ran like that!* Without any escape, we both began to yell for help. Desperately, I was hoping my friends would show-up; still, for five or ten

minutes, no one answered. Suddenly, a light came on at a near-by house. The little house had remained unnoticed in the dark, but when one of its' lights came on I could see it shared a common yard with the rose bushes. A moment later, out came a little old man, with a flashlight.

“Who’s out here? Who’s yelling?” He demanded.

“Help us please, sir! We’re over here, stuck in these thorny vines! Help, please!” I pleaded.

“You say’n you’re in my prize rose vines?” The old man asked.

“Over here, by the wall... Yes, sir... we’re stuck here in these vines. Please help us, sir!” I explained.

“What the hell are ya doin in my precious championship roses? How the hell you get in them?” He angrily queried.

“Please get us out, sir! We’re dying of pain, and I might be bleeding to death! Help us, please! I can feel the blood running all over my body!” I pleaded with the old man.

“How’d you get up there in my roses, anyway?” He persisted.

*The hell with your roses! Just get me the hell out of*

*these thorns!*

The old man was walking toward us, still waving the flashlight, but he'd not yet seen us. Though slow, at least help was on the way, in the form of a slothful plodding little old man. No one ever again has seemed to move as slowly. That's when the giant messed-up by opening his mouth.

"We're stuck in these damned big thorny stupid bushes. Get us the fuck outta here! Hurry-up!" The giant track-star yelled. "Hurry the hell up, buddy!" *Don't piss the old man off. He might walk off!*

"Don't make this man mad. What are we gonna do if he walks off and doesn't help us?" I beseechingly whispered to the giant.

"I'll hurry-up and leave you both there, if you an't be more polite than this, big fella. What the hell you doin in my precious roses? How the hell you get in them?" The old man again questioned. *God he's persistent!*

"Sorry sir, if we've hurt your roses. My friend and I just jumped over the wall above us. It was dark and we were just out jogging and accidentally fell over that wall up there and landed in these roses." I stupidly explained.

“Well, I’ll bet that ain’t the smartest thing you two boys ever did, and I’ll bet those big ole thorns don’t feel none too good, neither. Do they? Ha, ha!” He actually laughed, and then, continued shining the flashlight, back and forth, directly in our eyes, just to irritate us!

*I want to kill this old man!*

“Please help us out of this mess, sir.” I begged.

“Does it hurt much, boys? Ha, ha, ha!” The old man asked the giant and laughed, and then the old guy did a small arthritic hopping jig.

The old gent was truly enjoying our painful dilemma and continued to laugh, while he checked us out with his flashlight. No doubt he could see we were covered in blood. Although I was furious with his slowness, he was my only hope. It became acutely obvious that the aged man was not in a big rush to liberate us from our thorny predicament.

“Listen, old man get us outta of this mess and stop playing with us!” The giant insisted. *Don’t piss him off, stupid!*

“That big friend of yours ain’t too sociable is he, young man?” The old man addressed me.

“He’s always been that way, sir. Bad temper... always in trouble, sir... Even as a child, he was mean to his mother. He made her cry almost every day. Got kicked-out of school too many times. Been to prison for beating women! I’ve tried to help him change, but he’s too stubborn.” I lied, in hopes that this would encourage the old man to get me out of the thorns, before he liberated the giant.

“I don’t even know this kid. He’s the reason I’m stuck in these God damned vines... tried to steal my car.” The track star bellowed.

“See what I mean. He’s always been such a big liar, too. I don’t even know how to drive, sir.” I explained to the old man.

As always the lying part of my gray matter was working fine. As mentioned, I was angling to persuade the old man to like me better, in hopes that I’d be freed first, and I wouldn’t have to contend with the overly muscled track star tearing me apart... limb from limb.

“Just wait till I’m outta here, asshole.” Track star threatened me.

“We’ve been neighbors for as long as I can recall. We live in the Annandale suburb, near the beltway...



just came over here to do some jogging, and it was his idea to jump this wall in the dark.” I countered.

“You’ve probably ruined my roses.” The old man declared.

“I’m so sorry, sir!” I lied.

“Listen man just get us out of these vines!” The giant yelled.

“You can see what I’m talking about, sir. He’s that way with everyone. He never had good manners. I’m sorry about your roses, sir.” I painfully addressed the old man.

“You two boys are sure good and stuck, alright. Does it really hurt that much? Ha, ha, ha! Ya look a little bloody! Just give me a minute. All right, all right, I had enough fun with ya’ll. I’ll be right back. Let me go get my grandson and we just might can set you two free. But mind you, I’m gonna have to cut some of my beautiful rose vines, and I sure don’t like cut’n my championship roses! I’ve been growing some of these babies for a lotta of years. They don’t get that big over night, ya know. I’ve put in lots a time and effort with them, not to mention expensive fertilizer and pesticides.” He sternly lectured, as he walked away.

*Hurry the hell-up old man! These thorns are killing me!*

At this point, I actually thought I was bleeding to death, and this caused me to remember the time that Fritz the cat had torn-up my scalp. *Wonder how much blood I've lost, hanging here?* A few minutes later, the old gent was coming back, driving across his lawn in an old fashioned pick-up, with a line of small amber lights, decorating the truck's roofline. All the while that I'd been waiting for him to return, the giant had repeatedly threatened me. He was slowly coming toward us, with the perfectly round headlights on high beam, blinding us. He and his teenage grandson got out, and pulled out a large lethal-looking machete, and a pair of long handled shovels from the truck-bed.

The muscular track star and I were just hanging there, suspended like a pair of moths in a giant spider's thorny web, bleeding from head to toe. The headlights let me view my brawny nemesis, just four feet off to my right. Because of all the dried red blood, in the glare of the headlights the track star looked shocking. *I probably look like him?* I'd seen that my arms and hands were covered with tracks of blood. To say the least, I felt foolish. *All this pain*

*because of this stupid game... hubcap.*

The old man and the grandson used the shovels to push and pry apart the heavy prickly vines. Then, the old man used one of the shovels to hold a vine or two, while the tall kid wheeled the machete.

Working by the blinding white light of the harsh headlights, they freed me after a good five minutes of work. Even the expansion and contraction of my ribcage, while breathing was painful. Those were some of the longest minutes of my life. I'd spent a total of about thirty minutes in the vines. The painful circumstance made me recall one of Albert Einstein's astute comments; something to the effect that, "An hour sitting with a pretty girl on a park bench passes like a minute, but a minute sitting on a hot stove seems like an hour." The thirty minutes in those hellish vines seemed like eternity.

During the chopping operation, my main concern was with the teenage son swinging machete. The senior citizen continued to seem to genuinely enjoy my painful humiliation, and constantly complained about having to cut his precious roses, "because of some foolish joggers." I was so mad at my old savior, I couldn't think straight, but didn't dare express the slightest amount of anger, for fear that he'd walk off

with his grandson, and leave me hanging with my disaffected victim. Right then, the only person I hated more than the old man was myself.

“Young man, this here big mean looking fella, next to you, seems to really be hate’n on you, and he’s probably mean enough and big enough to beat your ass. Good thing we’ll be getting you free first son, and you can be off my property, before this here big bastard gets set free. Ha, ha...”

The sarcastic elderly little man, never let up with his debasing verbal harassment. Needless-to-say that night, I felt thoroughly humbled and more than foolish, so I swore to never again play hubcap. It was easy giving up the game, since none of my friends had come to help me out of the thorns. Being freed meant one last moment of renewed pain falling through a couple more smaller vines, one last painful reminder of my foolishness. The old man was right, as soon as I got out, I ran home, but it wasn’t much of a run. The thorns had a painful, yet a deeply numbing effect. They’d made my joints swell, just as the cactus spines had done, years before. Nevertheless, I did my best to get home quickly, and away from the giant.

Just as I’d begun to walk away, my friends had

finally appeared at the top of the wall, leaning over, looking down and laughing, as the old man and the boy worked to free the giant. My supposed friends didn't lend a hand. At least they brought the guy's car over and left it at the top of the wall, still running.

“See ya tomorrow, Joey. Hang in there... Ha, ha,ha! Hey man (addressing the track and field guy), your car's right here, and the keys are in the ignition. Hope you're not to sore. Ha, ha...” Those were the parting words of my fair-weather friends.

Once home, I went to the backyard and tried to rinse off as much blood as I could with the garden hose, before entering the house, while fearing that my folks would hear the water running. After I had rinsed most of the caked blood away from my skin and clothes. Washing my face, I could feel that the side of my face, which had first crashed down in the vines with was swollen and distorted. When my parents saw me, they were stunned at how scratched-up and swollen I looked.

When they inquired what happened, of course I told the minimum actual truth, tactically, while pointedly leaving out the parts about playing the stupid game, hubcap, the big guy who'd been chasing

me, as well as the crotchety old man and his machete wielding son helping to free me from the prison of thorny vines. Instead, I told my good Parents that I was jogging for exercise in a strange neighborhood, and for no apparent reason foolishly decided to leap over a low brick wall in the dark, never dreaming there could be drop-off on the other side, with gigantic painful rose bushes waiting at the bottom, which I'd managed to extricate myself from, after a brief struggle.

My Dad looked at me like he thought I had lost my mind. For a solid minute he squinted and frowned while examining my wounds. I could also see that he felt sorry for me, yet he offered me no verbal sympathy. *He somehow knows I deserve these injuries.* He just turned and shook his head as he walked back to his den to work, knowing there was a lie buried somewhere in my answers. His only comment was to tell me to go soak in a hot bath of Epsom salts.

This bloody event further served to convince Dad that I was a lost cause. Clearly, my folks were not totally fooled, but the attenuated explanation was the best lie I could muster, and it was only a lie of omissions. If I hadn't been hurting so much, perhaps

I could have created a more convincing lie.

Regardless, my Dad had given-up on me after the soaping of the school windows, anyway. As far as he was concerned, I was on my own... not worth fooling with. Dad was rarely if ever wrong.

Mom had a few old left-over codeine tablets and she gave me two of them. Thank God for drugs! When I finally went to the bathroom for a shower, I looked in the mirror of the medicine cabinet, and saw that one side of my face was swollen-up like a red balloon, with the corresponding eye almost completely closed. I looked and felt more ridiculous than after coming back from the hospital, when Fritz the cat had attacked my scalp.

Per Dad's instructions, I soaked in the hot tub with two heaping cups of Epsom salt stirred in, and that seemed to help with the pain and swelling. One of the wounds became terribly infected and required a couple of courses of antibiotics. Now in my old age, there remains a round white scar the size of a nail head on my upper right thigh, to forever remind me of 'hubcap.'

Thanks to my older friends, who had their own cars, and my having gotten a phony ID, I did the usual teenage partying thing, regularly spending a lot

of time at the various Georgetown drinking establishments, located around 31st street, in Washington DC, so I became a problematic drunk teenager. Because of my delinquency for the last two years of high school, my folks sent me away to military school, *Oak Union Military Academy*, a miserable all-male school, located seventy miles west of DC, in Virginia's beautiful Shenandoah Valley, part of the Blue Ridge Mountains. While the two years at the academy were indeed beneficial, and depressing, next to the alcohol-induced depression, those academy years were a snap.

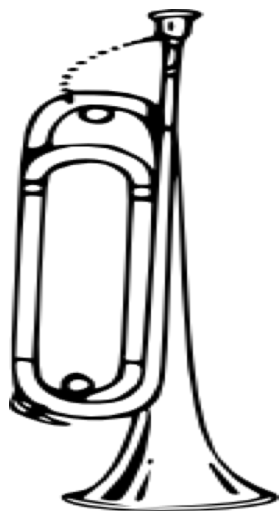
Each day at military school was pretty much nothing but a redundant regimented misery, only to be interrupted by some additional angst. The school spanned grades seven through twelve, with a grand total of only about two hundred and thirty cadets. Out of that small population of students, there were thirteen attempted suicides, in just the two years, when I attended. Fortunately, no one succeeded in killing themselves, but because of their attempted suicides, two of them sustained brain damage. One from massive blood loss after cutting both his wrists and forearms, and the other because he'd downed an entire bottle of aspirin, and never threw it up.



The latter poor soul was my roommate. His body shook the entire night, after downing the bottle of 200 tablets. Though he came close to his fatal goal, he survived. In those young days, because of my battles with alcohol addiction, I understood his need to die, as well as his right to die, so I just respectfully watched him shake and patently waited for him to die, that night. But come morning, he was still breathing, and was taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital. I had not tried to save his life, but instead respected his choice to kill himself. After that incident, he never returned to the school. I simply said that I didn't know that he'd swallowed the whole bottle of pills. Years later, my perspective about suicide changed. A kindly old American Native American would try to kill himself by taking an overdose of narcotics, but I stopped him from dying, by running to a payphone, and calling for the ambulance, the running back to get him up on his feet and moving, while periodically sticking my finger down his throat. In those days, many of the pay-phones, had the outline of a phone receiver drilled through its aluminum walls. OBJ



[OBJ]



## MILITARY SCHOOL

Other than for the strictly regimented procedures and corresponding misery, the military prep schools, are nothing like the illustrious military academies of *West Point, Annapolis*, or the newer *Air Force Academy*. To gain admittance to one of those renown educational institutions, the applicant must have impeccable character, near perfect grades, great SAT

scores, countless glowing recommendations, major extracurricular accomplishments, and often a letter written by a congressman, senator, or the vice president, stating why the applicant would be an asset to said institution, as well as to the United States military. Such perfection seems so impossible to me.

On the other hand, to gain entrance into a high school military academy, or a military prep school, the parents only needed adequate funds, and the desperate need to be rid of their delinquent child. So, the cadets of those auspicious institutions were generally the polar opposites of the impeccable young men, entering *West Point*, *Annapolis*, or the *Air Force Academy*. The military prep school was a place where parents would stash their troublesome sons, young guys who were too often out of control, and destined for things like: failure, prison, death, or other less than satisfactory destinations.

Hence, *Oak Union Military Academy* was chocked full of five-star screw-ups. All too frequently, I recognized myself in their faces and the stories of my less than illustrious fellow cadets. To get in the students had no need for a recommendation. They were generally failing in school, and had poor SAT scores. Because I

was trying to recover from a late night/early morning booze and weed high that morning, and had taken a handful of caffeine pills to counteract the high and hangover, I barely even recall taking the SAT. The huge dose of caffeine nauseated me, so I threw-up during the test, and had to get permission to leave the room to do that. I can't even recall if I finished taking the test, nor do I recall receiving a score. Armed with my phony ID cards, throughout my fifteenth year of life, I had time and again indulged in the Georgetown bar scene. I'd come home drunk or stoned on weed, most often both. Habitually, I managed to quietly sneak into my bed, without awakening my folks. Unbeknownst to them, I'd put some graphite into the door locks, door handles, and the hinges. American cops frequently like to call weed the 'Gateway Drug.' The older guys on the force typically try to brainwash to newer cops into believing that lie; even so, putting people in jail for the harmless herb is basically immoral, yet since the law dictates that they regularly arrest people for smoking or selling the herb, cops have a legal excuse to wreck people's lives. Frequently, cop candidates are carefully interviewed to make sure that they have an adverse opinion of weed, before being admitted into the police school/train program. If any drug is

the gateway drug to hard drugs, it's alcohol.

To be a cop requires a certain amount of physical where-with-all, and assertiveness, but these qualities can also be easily translated into excessive unbridled aggression. When you combine those traits with the fact that they fully believe weed is evil, you have cops, who routinely become too zealous, when it comes to a marijuana arrest. Said cops rely heavily on two facts: 1) as mentioned, weed is illegal, and 2) it is (in their mind) the Gateway Drug. These cop facts were especially true in the days of my youth, but it seems that they still persist, if not worsened, as indicated by all those unjust shootings of unarmed black men, and the ungodly numbers of people, which the United States now has locked away in its jails and prisons for non-violent crimes.

The idea of ganja being the 'Gateway Drug,' no doubt allows the cops to feel justified in the massive amounts of harm, they inflict upon the relatively innocent weed smokers. Law enforcement should be seriously ashamed. There's little doubt a fair percentage of cops, are like I used to be, before I developed empathy, at the ripe age of forty. When I was young, all of my friends smoked weed, but only one went-on to use harder stuff. Most likely, he was

the kind of guy, who was destined for hard drug addiction, anyway. Quite honestly weed had nothing to do with his abuse of the harder drugs. In my humble opinion weed is definitely not even remotely a Gateway Drug. Yes... almost all hardcore drug users have smoked weed. Still, very few weed smokers, go on to use the harder stuff. Hardcore drug users would most likely be hardcore drug users, even if ganja never existed. Furthermore, most hardcore drug users started-out with alcohol, and drink booze as a supplemental high to their addiction.

It's sort of like saying that milk must be the Gateway Drug, since all hard drug users drank milk, as infants. Some of the most God fearing conservatives, I know, smoke weed and only a few for legitimate medical reasons. Some smoke to sleep better, and others to attenuate chronic pain, due to combat injuries, some smoke it for their combat-induced *PTSD*, etc. Should they be arrested, too? According to the law in the great state of Alabama, the answer is a resounding 'yes.'

Again, if any thing, is a 'Gateway Drug' it's alcohol! After all, weed tends to make the user more cautious, whereas many alcohol drinkers become beyond reckless. Ganja generally makes the user kind and

considerate, whereas alcohol can often make a person arrogant and aggressive. Alcohol is highly addicting, with extremely dangerous withdrawals. Weed is not addicting. On the other hand, weed does make most people lazy, and only want to associate with other weed smokers, much as most alcohol drinkers enjoy associating with other drinkers. Since I fully realized that kush was not a dangerous drug, I made the rather foolish and fatal error of telling my parents that I smoked it. That open admission was one of the dumbest things I ever did. There I was, a top notched prevaricator, and yet I up and volunteered the naked truth, about smoking weed. To this day, I don't know whatever possessed me to do something so foolish as volunteer the truth, and that truth failed to set me free, but rather, it more or less imprisoned me.

With that thoughtless admission, my extremely strict military Dad went supersonic on me, lecturing me daily for weeks straight. He continued to bring up my weed-smoking confession for at least the next ten years, and I am by no means exaggerating! I'm surprised he didn't demand weekly urine samples. That mindless marijuana admission put a permanent scar on Dad's conservative psyche. Dad had more or



less already excommunicated me, because of my soaping the school windows, a few years prior, so my admission of smoking weed, really slammed-dunked Dad, at least until a few days right before he died. He held that disappointment over my head for over fifty years. He'd smoked cigars, cigarettes, and pipes, and had consumed enough whiskey and beer to float a battleship, but my smoking a little weed, every now and then, was simply too much for him to bare! If there's an afterlife, perhaps he has forgiven me, but honestly, I doubt it. That's just one reason why the idea of going to heaven doesn't seem appealing.

When admitting the truth, you have to be careful to whom you admit it. Hand the truth to the wrong person, and it will not set you free. Telling my Dad that small truth, made his life and mine a living hell, for half a century. Revealing that I smoked weed was a bell that had been rung and there was no stopping the ever expanding and maddening sound waves. After weeks of continual debasement, all I wanted to do was to stay clear of him. To this day, I still can't believe I told him the truth about the ganja. The truth can be a double edged weapon, or at the least tricky. Quite honestly, I'm so ashamed of my life that when I died, I honestly hope I don't run

into my parents, or any of my other relatives.

Even today, I know plenty of people, who drink booze virtually every evening, until they're fairly blotto, usually its wine or liquor, and yet these same people consider weed smoking an evil, if not immoral, indulgence; purely, because its illegal, as if the legal community knows more about addiction, than the world's scientific community. You can tell they're alcoholics for two reasons: 1. They invariably wait until after a specified time to drink, and 2. They never miss a day of drinking. Concurrently, some part of these daily drinkers realizes that weed's only illegal, because the government has to have a dependable method to make money off it. If exercise were illegal, they'd want the entire NFL put under arrest. There are 32 teams and each is allowed 53 players, a total of 1,696 athletes. Take a wild ass guess about what percentage of those guys have smoked ganja. The greatest olympian, the most successful olympic medal winner for all of history, is Michael Fred Phelps II, and he clearly has smoked weed, so just how dangerous do you think weed is?

Each year in the United States, about 750,000 to 1,000,000 people are needlessly arrested for weed! It's about as reasonable as getting arrested, because

you decided to wear old comfortable shoes. The United States legal system needs to be arrested, or at least sued.

If a law is harmful, immoral, or unjust, the citizens should be morally bound to disobey it, or at minimum work to get the law repealed.

*Chocolate Covered Legislation* by Dr. A.W.

Reyom

Ganja arrests definitely help to keep the *DEA*, the *US Coast Guard*, much of the legal system, the jails, and the prison systems in business, if not rolling in dough. And, because of which socioeconomic groups are most apt to be negatively impacted, keeping weed illegal helps to keep down the minority vote. If that sounds too far fetched, just keep reading and maybe it won't (Book IX, the chapter entitled, *The Habitual Offender*).

The worst thing weed ever did to me was to make me forget to check the car before going to bed one night. When I was sixteen, I got my learner's permit. One Saturday evening, I asked to use the family car and told my parents that I was going to a movie with

my friends. Instead, I went out on a ride with a tall lean laid-back brunette, and two fat joints. Coming home, I managed to get into my bed, without awaking my parents. I was hoping to be able to sleep late, since the next sunrise was a Sunday. But around 8:00 a.m., Dad came stomping into my room.

“Wake-up, Joey! Your Mom got in the car this morning to go to church and found these on the back seat! Have you completely lost your ever loving mind, son?” Dad fumed.

Before I opened an eye to see what Dad was talking about, I sensed the magnitude of the impending hangover. The pain began pounding around my eye sockets. Partially exposing one eye to the unwelcome morning light, there stood my Dad, at the foot of my bed, with a pair of pink panties in his hand, and an angry look on his crimson face. *Oh, shit!*

To say the least, the embarrassment I felt was overwhelming. I sensed that Dad didn't care about the sex, but he couldn't tolerate my being inconsiderate and leaving the brunette's panties in the car, knowing that Mom would use the car to go to church the next morning.

Mom went ballistic about the panties and screamed

about teen pregnancy for a the next few years. Both my parents could hold a grudge. As punishment, that Sunday, Dad made me do yard-work, till the sun went down. Then after dinner, I had to do house work, until time for bed. Though-out the next couple of weeks, Mom raved-on about me returning to the church, but luckily Dad refused to give-in on Mom's demand. I recall thinking that Dad's renewed antichurch decision was the only good thing that had happened out of that episode. On the other hand, it made Mom all the more angry. Both my parents were masters at holding a grudge, though Mom insisted that Dad was the worst. She was right, but not by much.

Some nights, I didn't come home, just to avoid the next day's punishment for being late. Surprisingly on those occasions, my folks didn't call the cops, and unexpectedly they were actually pleasant, when I'd finally did come home. They acted like nothing had happened. It was sort of like, when I set-off the bomb, and later, no one talked about it. I had some friends, who had a huge crash-pad, in Falls Church, and I was always welcome to sleep there, usually on an old lumpy couch. On those occasions, I was generally so smashed on booze, I could have slept on

a rock pile.

Even though I spent many a night on that couch, I now can't recall much about the place... too much weed and booze. All I now remember is that it had hardwood floors, a dark brown couch, and a standard toilet, that I'd sometimes puke in. For a few days, I also went to stay in the dorms of *Old Dominion University*, down in Richmond. Leaving home had temporally helped the situation, in that my parents stopped constantly lecturing me, and they seemed glad to see me, when I finally returned. I was honestly amazed they cared. I thought they'd be glad I was gone, and would not welcome my return.

Early one chilly morning, Dad was heading to work and spied me sleeping outside, buried in a bed of leaf mulch, just behind the bushes, against the front of the house. The freezing cold night prior, I had been repetitively holding onto a small tree for support, while throwing-up in the front yard, and I was too exhausted to climb the stairs to the front door, or to drive to my friend's house. Plus, I was afraid of waking my folks, if I puked in the house. So in my drunken state, the thick bed of soft leaf mulch looked rather warm and inviting.

It had been an extremely cold night, and so I buried

myself deep in the comfortable mulch, which kept me adequately warm, while I slept off the booze. When next I took a shower, I found I'd received a variety of nasty bug bites. Apparently, certain bugs can live in leaf mulch, even in the cold of winter. They were a type of ant, we called, 'crazy ants.'

When Dad found me asleep in the mulch, he purposely took-off from work that day, so he could supervise working me hard throughout that day. During the punishment, I struggled with the miserable effects of the monstrous hangover and the itchy bug bites. That miserable day, the garden hose saved me from the deadly effects dehydration. I guzzled voluminous amounts of hose water, simply to stay alive. That was the day that Dad almost broke my spirit. He was doing his best to do just that... break me. Looking back, there is part of me, that wishes he'd tried harder, or just kicked me out of the house, and thereby forced me to straighten-up my teenage Being so chemically compromised, I was just happy to have made it home, without taking out a fence or snapping a telephone pole. life. In my case, there's something to be said for tough love.

Another contributing factor, to my being sent to military school, was that, because of some of my

‘considerate’ friends, my parents were informed about my auto racing. Even before I got my learner’s permit, I was into what we called, ‘rat-racing.’ For a fifteen to sixteen year-old dope smoking boozier, I had mad reflexes and decent racing skills. A couple of my older friends had shown me how to: steer out of slides, do controlled ‘four wheel drifts,’ how to ‘thread the needle,’ and the safest ways to run stops signs and red lights, when racing on city or county roads. Late at night, we’d go practice racing on near unpopulated country roads, or for more high speed stuff, the DC beltway, until I had my driving techniques better honed. I drove anything I could get my hands on, and was hell on brakes, tires, and even worse on clutches. Power shifting is never good on a clutch plate. Very few of the cars, which I drove were automatics. In those days, it was thought that automatic transmissions lacked a certain amount of power transfer, and deprived the driver of some control. About half of the cars I drove were in tip-top shape, while others were far less than perfect: busted transmissions and missing a gear or two, bad brakes, slipping clutches, loose front ends, bad alignment, bald tires, etc.

In the 1960s’ version of the rat-race (the auto race



not the employment race), as we then conducted them, only used two competing cars. Both automobiles would start at the same location, and race to a preselected destination, usually a point on a map, often it was located on the other side of the city, but usually somewhere outside the city, either in Maryland or Virginia, although occasionally the finish line would be in the district. The finish point would be selected after some lengthy debate, held between the car owners. If their car had a high top-end speed, they generally preferred the race terminus would be located at some point far outside the city, and close to a major highway, where the high speed route offered them the advantage. Owners, whose cars had lower rear-end ratios, for great acceleration, and were designed with good cornering/handling ability, preferred to keep the race within the city. Sometimes, where one car was clearly inferior, additional time was added-on at the end of the race to balance the scales, a handicap, if you will. In other words, the inferior car might arrive at the finish point three minutes later, but still win the race, depending on the time subtracted for the handicap. The starting point and end point of the race, as well as the handicap, if any, had to be agreed upon by both owners. Once an agreement had been

established the two owners would leave and be given time to drive to the end point, before the race began. The endpoint also had to have a functional payphone present.

The owners of the cars would wait by that pay-phone. If you wrecked their car, or were stopped by the police, you had to call that pay-phone, so they would know the race was over, what had happened, and where they could pick-up their car, be it wrecked or in police impound. About twenty percent of the time, one car wouldn't finish the race, due to: some mechanical problem, a police stop, or wreck.

Before starting the race, I'd carefully scribble down the prescribed pay phone number on a scrap of paper, fold it over, and put it in my jean's pocket with a few silver dimes, with which to make the perilous call. Indeed, a few times, I had to call the owner to deliver him the bad news. Zooming past a cop, during the race, didn't usually mean the race was over. If you were in excess of one hundred miles per hour, you just kept going for a couple of minutes to lengthen-out your lead, then once safely out of his view, select an alternate route, incase the cop had radioed ahead. That's one reason why it really paid to know all the roads around the DC area. But if the

traffic didn't permit escape, it was simply time to get a ticket, and to call the car owner; although once I pullover for a police stop, and before the cop could get out of his car, I ran for it on foot, and barely managed to escape. One minute later, I phoned the owner, telling him what happened and to immediately report his car as stolen. Sorry to say, after I got my drivers license, I managed to lose it three times. Later, when racing without a driver's license, luckily I never got caught. Once, after I'd been forced to abandon the race, the cop accidentally found me standing at a urinal in the bathroom of a doughnut shop.

The races usually covered anywhere from ten to just over one hundred miles. The longest race, I ever drove, was from Alexandria to Richmond, straight down US-95. Obviously, the longer the race, the greater the likelihood of wrecking, or having an unpleasant encounter with the cops. Radar guns were not in big use then, but speed traps were, and back then, the cop was allowed to simply judge your speed, based on their subjective observation. The radar gun had first been developed to measure the landing speed of aircraft, then it was later used to catch speeders in 1948 in Garden City, New York,

but it would be many years, before it came into regular use by the police.

As a rule, the longer the race the larger the bet, and so the more money the driver could garner, but only if he won. Each driver would typically pullout a map, and talk with their friends (race affiliates), to help plan their route, and incase of trouble, a couple of alternate routes, to the appointed endpoint. The rat race was no-holds-barred: running red lights and stop signs, reversing one-way streets, crossing open fields and median strips, and crazy excessive amounts of speed were the norm. The only thing you couldn't do was to purposely sideswipe or hit the other car, though I did that once, just to get someone out of my way, but it was only because they were purposely being passive aggressive. License plate were always scratched-up, slightly dented, and/or muddy to avoid identification.

The race often required a fair amount of improvisation, generally due to unforeseen conditions, and various traffic issues. Any damage to the car was all on the owner. As a result, the owners of the cars tended to be extremely rich metropolitan guys; often they were older attorneys. No women owned the cars, nor did any women race. Street rat

racing is nothing like quarter mile drag races or oval track racing, and it's far more dangerous. On the drag strip or oval track the cars all go in the same direction, not so with rat racing; cars came from various directions, and some with little or no warning. I can't begin to count the number of one ways streets I reversed, and I've no doubt run thousands of red lights and stop signs. Again, that is no exaggeration!

Once while mildly stoned, I ran through thirteen red lights in a row, in downtown Washington DC, never slowing slightly. Both the driver and car, which I was up against, were nothing short of wickedly amazing, and I'd not been given a handicap, so I had to 'go radical' (a phrase meaning to ignore virtually all traffic rules and laws) to get the win, to get my share of the prize money. Very few people were involved in the rat race: the ever unknown (fake name of Celero Summa) race organizer/promoter, the owners of the cars, maybe a few of their friends, maybe a mechanic, the two drivers, advisors/friends of the driver, the judge at the end, the flag guy at the start, and a few betting people. This group varied between ten to twenty people. It was understood that the driver was viewed as low man on the totem pole,

nothing but an extension of the car, but he was to do whatever it took to win.

Except for the two car owners, those involved usually only used first names. Since I still lived at home and my parents generally answer the phone, and so the car owners would call my aforementioned friends in Falls Church, and then those young friends would call me at home, to give me the owner's phone number, or sometimes they just tell me to call Summa. I'd make the requisite call from a pay-phone and discuss price (percentage of winnings), the various attributes of the vehicles, the opposing driver, if known, and of course, the date, time, and location of the race. My life had always been heavily dependent on keeping trifling secrets from my folks. Sometimes I'd meet with the owner, before the race, but typically not. Too often, the owner of the car acted like it was my privilege to risk my life. After a while, I knew most of the owners and most of their cars. One man was so into car collecting, he had two huge warehouses: one for his older collector cars ( I never saw those.), and one warehouse for high performance cars (I only saw the ones I drove.). The well spoken man was supposedly an Italian-American attorney with over fifty cars; although he didn't look

to be Italian, nor was he arrogant, like an attorney. Somehow, he was able to maintain the warehouses on the land used by *National Airport*, now called the, *Ronald Reagan Airport*. For that reason, I imagined him to be a spy, and he didn't seem like a lawyer. Whenever he spoke, it sounded like he was reading from edited text. He was clearly the most intelligent and unusual man in the group.

Where two shots of liquor had made me perform better at the pigeon shoots in Spain, one shot of whiskey and a few hits off a joint, helped make me a better auto racer. Racing on weed, enhanced my feel of the car. Ganja gave me a better understanding for when the rear tires would break loose on a curve, and how much to back off the horsepower, or to counter steer, if they did. Weed also allowed me to better judge and control a purposeful slide or drift. On weed, I seemed to instinctually know the shift points, without glancing at the tach, and to more or less, become one with the car.

Odd as it may seem, the combination of drinking one shot and smoking a part of a doobie also helped to judge breaking distances. My lousy depth perception is but one of my many short-comings, yet because of that problem, when trying to decide if

there was adequate room to get between two cars in different lanes at some distance, I'd often simply eliminate the problem by driving on the shoulder of the highway. Rat racing was all about split second innovation.

When I'd run red lights downtown, the buildings on the corners of the intersections, frequently blocked my view of approaching traffic, potentially coming from the left and/or right. So when possible, I'd crowd the center of the intersection with my left wheels on or barely over the center line, which allowed me a fraction of a second more time to counter steer should a car come from the right, even though the first car which might hit you could come from the left. Consequently, you'd have to consider the traffic coming head on. With quick slight head rotations, I'd look for dangerous unseen traffic coming from the left, and then the right. Running downtown red lights was always the scariest part of rat racing.

When running lights at excessive speed, I'd just stare straight ahead and rely on peripheral vision. The good thing about peripheral vision is that it's more sensitive to movement, than is one's central vision. Yes, if you're looking straight at something, it's



harder to see it move, than if you pick it up on your periphery. Ergo, you're better off not looking left and right, but just staring straight ahead, through the middle of the intersection. You may find that hard to believe, but it's true. I had two wrecks involving such intersections, but was able to steer just enough to avoid the lethal T-bone, just some bent metal and no one was hurt.

After said wrecks, I'd wipe my prints off the steering wheel, gear shift, and door handles, then I'd politely and convincingly tell the driver of the other wrecked car, that I was going to find a pay phone to call the police. Indeed, I'd find a pay phone, since they were nearly everywhere in those days, but instead of phoning the police, I'd use one of my silver dimes to call the owner of the car. The owner would call the cops to say his car had been stolen. Then, I'd just wander off. As mentioned, street cameras rarely existed. Had someone been hurt, I would have also called an ambulance and kept on walking. As mentioned, my adolescent mind was void of any measure of responsibility or empathy, and I stupidly didn't worry about someone being killed.

If your parents never had children, chances are, you

won't either.

Dick Cavett

While the above TV host's quote has been referred to as being simply ridiculous, I think it makes a valid point; still, I found a way around that. Even though, I never formally adopted her, I raised her all those wonderful years. The rat races were typically started around 3 to 4 a.m., so there was less traffic to contend with. When the race first began, I'd feel a cool fear, a slight sweat, which would continue for a minute or two, then I'd become focused, as the fear faded. With enough fear, the anterior pituitary releases significant amounts of beta-endorphin, and when that endogenous painkiller binds to receptors in the amygdala, the fear simply disappears. It's all a matter of neuroendocrinology.

If I had a fender-bender and the car remained drivable, I simply kept going. The races occurred so often, that I had over twenty-one car wrecks, before I was twenty-one years old. But, considering the nature of the races, that wasn't so many. I figured that in a car wreck, all I needed to do to survive was to avoid being hit on my driver's door, or getting nailed with a flush head-on.

When I first started racing, a fair number of my opponents were guys racing their own cars, but as the months passed and rat acing grew in popularity, and more and more often, it would be the rich car owners paying someone, like me, to drive their high performance car. Generally, the car owners were older guys, who had money to burn, and just loved their fast expensive cars, but didn't want to race, themselves. Because of increased police control, such racing probably no longer exists. Today, I rarely witness someone winding-out their hot car on some public road.

The owners loved the various costly qualities of their car, but weren't into experiencing their car's full-out performance, firsthand. Every so often, an owner would want to ride along during the race. I always did my best to discourage them, but sometimes I didn't have a choice. They were just another witness in court, or a potential victim if I wrecked, and would thereby complicate my ability to escape the situation. In addition, they tended to be a distraction. Furthermore, I didn't like having a passenger, who could see that some of my time-saving antics relied on luck and shortcuts, rather than skill, i.e., driving along the sidewalk to get around traffic, reversing a

one-way street, speed shifting the car and therefore grinding down the clutch plate, cutting across open fields and banging-up the car's undercarriage, etc. If I made it to the end of a race, I enjoyed the dishonest public allusion that it was purely due skill.

For some psychophysiological reason, once I got passed the first minute or two of initial fear, I began to feel more and more confident. Sometimes during a race, I even felt invincible. My meager wits and the car body were my preservation. During a car wreck, some people perceive of themselves as if they are an embryo in an eggshell, but once pumped-up on adrenaline I oft felt bulletproof, and the car had become my fast and highly maneuverable tank. The few times the owners rode with me, things generally went okay. Other drivers would regularly allow, if not encourage, the owner to accompany them. No owner rode with me more than once. During one race, an owner insisted that his girlfriend also ride along. She was sitting in his lap, when I was feeding into traffic at high speed. Slightly nicking one car and narrowly missing several others, she screamed and literally wet her pants and his, too.

When presented with an unfamiliar car, the driver would be given about twenty minutes to drive the

car to better determine, acceleration, braking, top-end, and how it might take a curve. Usually, I'd quickly drive to the beltway, take an on ramp, weaving down the highway, shifting up through the gears and testing how it held the road, then take the next off ramp. Upon returning, we, the drivers, were allowed to refuse to drive the car, if they felt it was too unsafe, the drivers might bitch and moan about certain aspects of the car, but no one ever declined to race. We drove all sorts of cars, but mostly muscle and sports cars. Cars were usually matched by comparing such things as: engine displacement, framing, alleged horsepower, cams, traction, wheels/tires, carburetors, transmissions, the type and ratio of the rear-end, known racing history, alleged cornering and handling capabilities, etc. No one ran nitrous, back then. Few people, understood how horsepower translated into viable performance on the road, so a lot of the discussion about the relative merits of one car versus another was just straight nonsense. People, more often than not, lied about displacement and horsepower, trying to play it down, to avoid the other guy demanding a handy-cap. I understood practically nothing about mechanics. It was nearly impossible to tell, if an engine had been bored-out, or how big a cam had been installed, or if it had certain

other modifications. The proof was always in the performance, and that was why the test drive was so important.

Like the pigeon shoots in Spain, bets were the accepted norm, usually based on the attributes of the vehicle and the driver's history; however, unlike the betting in Spain, some of the losers lacked a certain amount of decorum. There were a few fist fights. Most bets were not so much dependent on logic, as they were on ego, and the addictive desire to gamble. Just like the pigeon shoots, the betting put pressure on me, and so I preferred not to know, who bet how much on whom. As with any job, it's usually not the job, which presents the problem, it the folks you work with, and many of the car owners were egomaniacs.

A large part of driving was learning to relax, especially when the pressure was on. I've never been a particularly brave man, so I didn't always succeed at relaxing, especially at the beginning of the race. But with practice, I learned to control a modicum of my fear. The only enjoyable aspect of the fear was that as it mounted, and I felt more and more afraid, the fear would suddenly vanish; usually, at some point early in the race, but never did I attain the cool

my father possessed.

There were only about twenty-five rat-race drivers in all of the Washington DC area. During a three year period, two died while racing; that's only eight percent. None were too seriously injured. Of all my many cousins, the best one died young, punching-out of an F-14, right after an engine failure, coming off the deck of the aircraft carrier, the USS Nimitz. Many years later, I would become a licensed skydiver. I had two excellent instructors, both of them died skydiving. They too were extremely good men. Coincidentally, both of the rat race drivers, my cousin, and my two skydiving instructors were very fine young men. Some say the good died young, and from what I've seen it seems to be true.

Not all the cars we raced were in the best of shape. The autos I tended to admire the most were the sleepers. A sleeper was a car that looked relatively old and ill-kept on the outside (few minor dents, faded paint, spots of light rust, etc.), but the engine, transmissions, suspension, wheels, and tires were pristine. Once, I drove a car where I had to pump the brakes each time I needed them, and its' second gear was completely gone. So, I'd pump like mad, before entering a curve, or turn, and would wind-out first

gear past redline, to then power shift into third, no doubt grinding teeth off the badly slipping clutch, but rat racing wasn't about safety and preserving the car's mechanics; it was solely about winning.

Certainly massive horsepower can make a marked difference, but generally when racing in the city, how a car handled was significantly more important. Nonetheless, a lot of racing guys used to like to say, 'There's no replacement for displacement.'

Nevertheless, in downtown racing, cornering and braking were vital, and so brakes, suspension, steering, the car's center of gravity, tires, etc., were critical variables. Giant horsepower was more for the open highways, which in the DC area meant the beltway or US Route Ninety-Five. For a few years, I raced anything, hopped-up Volkswagen bugs to big block stock cars, running more than one thousand horsepower. I tried to be a creative driver, but I was never a great one, just above average, but all things considered I was lucky.

As a driver, I only got paid if I won. If I didn't wreck, I'd win about eighty percent of the time, yet I never lost, driving a quality car. Most of my wrecks were due to the unforeseen and my own stupidity. Sometimes other non-racing drivers would get



freaked-out, just because I was traveling so fast, or siding through an intersection. They see me coming and in a crazy panic, they'd accidentally steer right into my path, usually I assumed this to be some form of subconscious passive aggression, and I still believe that to this day.

One time, my car spun-out going through a down sloping intersection, and so I just barely planed off the road, but before I could get back onto the street, a woman who had seen me spin-out, was so shocked, that she unnecessarily stomped on her brakes in apparent fright, causing her to slide off the road and hit me! Had she done nothing, but just kept on driving, we'd both would have been okay. Fear can kill rational thought.

Winning a rat-race, through downtown Washington DC, would garner the car's owner from \$500 to \$15,000... a serious chunk of change, especially back then. The driver would be paid 10% to 20% of the purse, along with all the adrenaline his moronic teenage brain could swill, and teenage brains can guzzle adrenaline by the bucket load. In those days, teenagers were thought to have the fastest reflexes, but while reflexes are plainly important, racing is a game best played by a highly experienced head. My

bet is that around age thirty-five to forty is the ideal age for race car drivers. For most men, their best reflexes are around age twenty-four.

All of my winnings, I hid in a jar underneath a rusty tin shed in the backyard, per the advice the old Jewish commander, who I'd sold coins to, four years before in Spain. Right before the race, almost always, the side bets would be bigger than the purse. Once a man bet his house on a race, and luckily he didn't lose it. Oddly enough, no one ever approached me, trying to get me to throw a race. The closest thing to a bribe I ever received occurred right before a race. The owner of my car had just bet a shitload of cash on me. One minute before the start he walked by my window and handed me two hundred dollars saying, "Don't let me down, kid!" That wasn't illegal but it did add to the pressure I already felt.

During any race the worst problem was always the unexpected. In one race, I hit a patch of gray gravel, which I hadn't seen, because the color of the gravel closely matched the color of the asphalt, and the tires immediately lost all traction, ergo the car slide off the road and smacked a telephone pole at around eighty miles an hour, knocking me unconscious. When I woke-up, the telephone pole was sitting next

to my right shoulder, where the passenger seat should have been. The rough creosoted wooden pole was barely touching my arm. When I came to, I could smell the creosote, where the car had damaged the pole, thereby releasing the pungent odor.

Apparently my mouth had been open during impact, and the top of the hard plastic steering wheel had jammed into my open mouth. When I woke-up, I noticed that my upper and lower molars had cut grooves into the black plastic steering wheel, yet luckily my teeth were okay, just a bit loose, and the corners of my mouth hurt for a couple of days.

But the most unusual aspect of the wreck was that I experienced a short period of total amnesia, about ten minutes. Amnesia really demanded my attention, since I couldn't even recall my own name! For a while, I just sat in the car, repeated trying to remember, something... anything. The harder I tried to find a nugget of memory, the more fear I developed, so I forced myself to relax. While I realized I was sitting in a wreck, and there was a telephone next to me, I literally had no clue about my past, or who I was. *Do I have parents?* All I could figure out was that I must have been driving and hit the telephone pole, but couldn't remember that I had

been rat racing.

I'd wrecked just outside the District of Columbia, around four a.m. Every so often a car would pass by, yet nobody stopped to check on my health. The drivers would just look at me, and my demolished car, and I'd look back at them, yet they'd just keep on going. No one wanted to get involved. Without any memories nothing made sense, and I just felt lost and disoriented. Nevertheless, it didn't bother me too much. Then, intuitively I seemed to know that somewhere not too far away, I had a home, and in which direction my home lied, yet it was only an instinctual feeling. That's when an amazing thing happened. I closed my eyes and suddenly my 'mind's eye' (for lack of a better term) leaped out of my body and went racing down the streets. While still sitting in the wrecked car's driver-seat, with my eyes closed, I could literally see the roads, all houses and trees, on either side of the street, and all the turns to finally arrive at my home, including all the tangential entities, e.g., stop signs, red lights, bushes, signs, stores, mailboxes, etc. It was like I was Superman, flying three feet off the ground, following the roads back to my home. I didn't try to do this; it just happened.

Once my mind's-eye arrived at the family house, my weird out-of-body consciousness passed through the front door, without opening it, floated down the hallway, passed through my Parent's bedroom door, and into their bedroom. It was like I was hovering somewhere near their ceiling, gazing down upon my sleeping Parents in their bed, and that was when my lost memories suddenly came flooding back, ergo the amnesia had simply vanished.

Evidently finding my Parents was the conduit to my lost memory bank. After all, a baby's Parents are probably heavily ingrained with nearly all early memories, within the brain's two hippocampi, each hippocampus nestled in their own temporal lobe, with the person's memories stored in a positional-chronological arrangement. Memories are integrated in many ways: rhymes, colors, smells, tastes, tactile sensation, kinesthetics, shapes, sounds, music, voice, texture, dates and times, frequencies, behaviors, logical associations, etc., but most definitely they interconnected with each person's perception of time, in effect the totality of those memories form each person's timeline or life history, so by finding the earliest roots of that timeline, namely my Parents, I once again found the entire memory tree. Now days,

the weakest aspect of my memory capability is in remembering the order at which things have happened in my life. Consequently, I've wondered if that car wreck didn't somehow damage my temporal recall.

In a tragic manner, Alzheimers works in a similar manner, but with the most recent memories going first, for indeed they have the fewest reinforcing associative memories, and then the disease works its way backwards through the individual's history. This may also have something to do with why it's harder for an older person to learn new things. With Alzheimer's, the first to go are the most recent friends and acquaintances, then the children, next the siblings, then last to go are the parents. If it were a tree, first the leaves and the small twigs die, then the branches, the trunk, and finally the roots. Again, this indicates that memories are arranged in something of a temporal fashion, much as the memories in this book. Although in this book, they may occasionally be a bit out of order. Besides, everything in here is fiction, anyway. Right?

At first, my mother's Alzheimers made me wonder why there isn't a condition, which works in reverse, where the person loses their oldest/earliest

memories first. On the other hand, to some degree perhaps that is how memory naturally functions in most people. In the healthy aged brain, the earlier memories go first. Maybe subconsciously this is one reason I'm writing this, for the older I get, the more vague my childhood memories become. In writing these early memories, oft times it's as if they happened to someone else.

Sitting in the wrecked car, with my memories suddenly restored, again I opened my eyes and there I was, with the telephone pole still next to my right shoulder. *I should have thought, that there could have been loose gravel in the road.* Other than the aforementioned few loose teeth and sore mouth and jaw, from hitting the steering wheel, I was fine. Chewing remained a tender process for a week. When my Dad saw the marks and bruises at the corners of my mouth, he asked me what had happened, and so, I said that I was riding a bicycle, the chain slipped, causing me to fall forward, and the handlebar went in my mouth.

Taking off my T-shirt, I wiped my prints from the car, found a pay-phone and called the owner, who was anxiously waiting by the finish-line. Uncharacteristically, I waited for him to show-up. To

say the least, the man was not a happy camper, when he saw his destroyed canary yellow *Ford Fairlane*, tightly hugged around the splintered, but not snapped, telephone pole. Fortunately for me, in those races, the drivers assumed no liability. Never did I ask the owners, if they had insurance. Often they did, and in circumstances like that, they'd call the police claiming their car had been stolen, or if there clearly wasn't any witness, that they themselves had been driving and had been run off the road by some maniac. Usually, I raced twice a week, Friday and Saturday, and participated in a total of roughly two to three hundred rat races.

During another disastrous race, I was driving a beautiful modified large cam 1965 Pontiac GTO convertible, oyster shell blue paint, running a 389 c.i., breathing through three deuces. I never liked racing a convertible, incase of a rollover, you'd be toast. At the time, the GTO was doing around 90 mph, rounding a slow curve, when unexpectedly a young boy popped-out of the woods on a small bicycle, directly into my high speed path. What a little kid was doing, riding his bike, at 3:30 a.m., yet remains a mystery. Perchance, the child was a bad sleeper.



To avoid hitting him, I had to plow into the left front quarter panel of a massively heavy, oncoming dump truck; striking it so hard, that the huge vehicle was knocked clean off the road. Fortunately, I hadn't hit the kid, who was then hightailing it down the road on his bike. Needless to say, the magnificent GTO had been instantly rendered worthless. Taking off my shirt, I wiped my prints clean, climbed out, wiped the door handle, then put my shirt back on.

Slowly emerging from the heavy truck's cab, came a colossus enraged hairy driver, who chased me for a good thirty-seconds, around the two wrecks. Thank God, he was overweight and winded quickly.

Amazingly, I was uninjured and hadn't been wearing a seatbelt. Foolishly, I never wore one, imagining myself to be invincible. Foolishly, I've clung to the belief that if I buckled on a seat belt, it was like admitting that I'm not invincible, and inviting death. Once the stout dump-truck driver was bent forward at the waist, and rapidly sucking wind, I ran away to find a pay-phone to call the owner.

"I'll be right back. I'm going to find a payphone and call the police, to report the accident, sir. Just wait right there the cops will soon be here. I'll be right back. Sorry!" I smoothly lied to the angry winded

truck driver.

After I got my learner's permit, it wasn't more than two months, before I got locked up for reckless driving. I'd out run the cop and lost him; still I'd given-up on the race, since trying to shake the cop, I had gotten too far off my planned course, to possibly win. Moreover, my attempting to evade the cop had taken a long time, and so I realized that most likely a number of police cars had been radioed into the chase. Realizing that most likely several cops were then looking for the highly distinctive car, I knew I needed to get off the road and hide it. Foolishly (I say 'foolishly,' since doughnut shops were cop hangouts.), I stopped at a *Krispy Creme* doughnut shop, and parked behind the building, to go inside and use the payphone to call the owner, and tell him where to pick-up his car. Before making the call, I decided to use the bathroom.

Coincidentally, but not surprisingly, the same cop who had been pursuing me, just happened to stop there, probably to get a doughnut and a coffee. When he drove behind the *Krispy Creme*, he spied the fancy car, I'd been racing. As stated, it was hard to miss; a red classic *Ford Fairlane* with two thick black racing strips, equipped with a well tuned 427 c.i. engine,

which inhaled through two mega *Holly* four barrels, and had an insanely monster cam. The car ran on new cheater slicks and with a butter smooth shifting *Hurst* four speed. It was a fast machine, but was more designed for drag racing, rather than street racing; even so, it handled well enough of have successfully ditched the cop.

I wasn't happy about not winning any prize money. While standing in front of a urinal, I was thinking about what I would tell the owner, and about ordering a few lemon and raspberry doughnuts, when surprising the cop kicked in the men's room door, with a loud, 'BANG!'.

"Give me your God damn license, you sum bitch!" The cop yelled.

"Can I please finish peeing, sir, before I fish-out my wallet?" I requested.

"Yeah, just hurry the fuck up, you crazy teen-age asshole! And, wash your hands!" He ordered. *He curses like a sailor, so maybe he's not all bad!*

"Yes, sir." *He knows I really out drove him, and he can't stand it.*

There were no windows in the bathroom, and short of charging through and past the cop, and if

successful, jumping in the car and zooming away, with too many cops already looking for the car, there was little to no hope. *He's seen my face.*

Coincidentally years later, I would have a run-in with another doughnut-eating cop, who would very nearly bust me for selling drugs. Since the owner of the car had lost his bet, I had to call my Parents to come bail me out of jail. It just so happened that my uncle was visiting at the time and came to the jail with my Dad. For my dear Parents, that was a supreme embarrassment, since my uncle was one of the more respected members of the family, a professor at the University of Maryland Medical School. That uncle was a bit full of himself, for when he found out from my Dad that I smoked pot, he conjured-up a rather stupid lie. He was mildly bright, but at times, bright people do brainless things.

“I once read a story about the whalers in Nantucket (the lie) in the early 1800s. They sailed into the Indian Ocean in search of whales. In one of the countries, bordering that ocean, the sailors purchased marijuana. I believe it was India. Once they returned to Nantucket, winter arrived and they had smoked-up the last of their supply of the marijuana. Their ships were frozen in the harbor, so they couldn't sail away

to go get more marijuana, and they all died of marijuana withdrawals!” My uncle sagely stated, nodding his head. *What a fucking idiot! He’s got plenty of education, but he can’t lie worth a damn. I guess he thinks I’ll believe him. Dad does.* To call the owner of the car, I phoned from the jail. Luckily, the owner had agreed to say that he had loaned me the car, but as mentioned, refused to bail me out. If he hadn’t spoken-up for me, I would have been fighting the charge of grand theft auto. My Dad wanted to know why the man had loaned me the car. Ever ready with lies, I told my Dad that I’d been in a poker game and the guy had run out of cash, and put-up the use of his car for one night, against my fifty dollar raise, and I’d won with four kings. Since Dad loved poker and knew I did as well, the lie mercifully worked. The truth would have killed Dad. He begrudgingly bailed me out.

A few days later, Dad went with me to court. The prosecutor told Dad that the reckless driving charge carried a one year suspension of my driver’s license, and a thousand dollar fine. Dad pleaded with the state prosecutor, who then said that if I plead guilty, he’d reduce it to six months with a five hundred dollar fine. My Dad was thrilled to get the deal, but

when Dad and I stood before the judge, and I was asked how I pled, I nevertheless answered, “Not guilty.” That response negated the deal Dad had struck with the prosecutor. Dad was furious, but restrained, since we were standing before the judge. Beads of sweat popped out on his balding forehead, and he quickly addressed the judge.

“Your honor, my son means to plead guilty!” Dad asserted.

“Your honor, do I have to plead guilty, if I know I’m not guilty?” I deceitfully spoke-up, running the best bluff I could muster.

“It’s your choice, son. Non-guilty it is. Have a seat, and we’ll get to you, as soon as we’ve heard the other pleas.” The judge responded.

When my case was finally called, and after the cop had finished accurately explaining what had occurred, I then falsely accused the cop of lying, saying that he had actually been speeding, and as a result had almost hit me. I explained that indeed I had inappropriately tried to drive across US Route 95 to get to the north bound lane, but that the cop had come over a rise in the highway, in excess of one hundred miles per hour, and between his slamming

on his breaks and my steering to the right and gunning my engine, to avoid his hitting me, the cop had slid by, out of control, narrowly missing my rear bumper.

“Your Honor, it was as if this police officer was literally trying to ram my car, and kill me. Looking back now, he probably wasn’t intentionally trying to kill me, but if I hadn’t reacted quickly, his police cruiser would have demolished me. I’d be dead, now. I had to do my best to accelerate and steer away from him. Your Honor, he almost killed me with his reckless speeding. Granted, I was wrongly cutting across the highway, but when I started across there were no cars coming in the South bound lanes. It was late and the road looked clear, but the officer was traveling so fast, that when he came over the rise, almost three hundred yards away, I barely had time to avoid him. And he didn’t have his emergency lights or his siren on. He was just running wide-open, like some kind of maniac. I figured that since he was driving so fast, without his lights and siren, that he was just being a reckless joy rider, what else could it have been? Is there some kind of police log which can prove that he was actually on a call? You noticed that at the beginning of his describing what he wants

you to believe is the truth, that he didn't say that he was on a call, because he wasn't! After I was barely able to avoid his hitting me, I just continued across the median strip, to the North bound side of US 95 and drove-off. It was pretty clear that his reckless speed had nearly done us in, and that the near collision was to a large extent the officer's fault, and I didn't realize that he had tried to follow me after that. His claim that I drove away at a high rate of speed, and repeatedly changed lanes to evade and lose him, is simply untrue... a boldfaced lie! He probably just had a hard time finding me in all the traffic. He knows what he did, Your Honor. {At that point, I was pointing my index finger directly at the cop, and he was not looking too happy, with me.} In this situation, the police officer is the reckless driver, not me. I didn't see him again, until he kicked-in the bathroom door at the doughnut shop. If I'd been trying to get away from him, why would I have stopped, right in the middle of the officer's alleged chase to go get a doughnut, and right near where this alleged chase was supposed to have happened? It doesn't make sense Your Honor! I'd have just kept driving to get out of the area."

At the end of my deceit-filled pitch, the judge had



largely believed me, and I walked out of the courtroom, with only a thirty-five dollar fine, for ‘improper driving.’ Dad had bargained me a deal for six months suspension of my license, with a five hundred dollar fine, but my lies had allowed me to walk-out for thirty-five dollars! Dad was shocked, and asked me where I’d learned to lie like that. I just said, “Mom, Grandpa, and bluffing at poker with you, Dad.” Dad tried to hide it, but he was clearly impressed with my lying, and so was the State Attorney, who merely watched and never said a word. The cop, although miffed, was shocked, for he knew the truth. For me, that brief spontaneous deceitful display was a thing of beauty; worse yet, I was filled with pride.

Because of the above reasons and more, my folks banished me to the aforementioned military school, for the next two years. When Dad told me I was going, he delivered the verdict, as if he was sentencing a convicted murderer to life in Siberia, without hope of escape. I tried to look grief struck, but actually I was pleased, for somewhere deep inside my chemically polluted adolescent brain, I realized that if I didn’t make a drastic change, my life was most likely destined for prison or something

worse. The regular use of alcohol and ganja were no problem, but the need for adrenaline and my lack of sleep, were literally killing me.

With my unscrupulous history, of which I've only mentioned a few items, I was immanently qualified for admission to the aforementioned military high school. At the school the majority of my fellow classmates also realized that the school was their last chance to succeed in life. Of course, none of them ever admitted to this fact, but it was unmistakably true. The average teenage male ego, is capable of massive amounts of deceit, not only toward others, but to themselves. Looking back, I don't know how my Dad ever withstood my adolescence. For Dad, most likely the two wars had been a snap, in comparison to the embarrassment he was forced to endure raising my delinquent self.

Although I seriously hated that miserable institution, said military school turned-out to be my salvation. Still, it would be many years before my life would take on any semblance of genuine purpose. Clearly, I've been my own worst enemy, but my chemically polluted mind has always looked for an excuse for my own failings, something or somebody on which to blame my many flaws and mistakes, rather than on

my own piss poor impulsive judgement.

Maybe it was the lead in the gasoline, which was responsible for my delinquency, and being sent away to military school; anything but my own fault. That seeming silly statement, about the lead in the gas, may not be as puerile as it sounds. One summer, I had worked at a government employ gas station. There, I had constantly breathed Biblical amounts of fumes and regularly got the gasoline on my hands and blue jeans. There were no automatic pump handle shut-off valves, back then. I pumped gas into long lines of cars, day after day. Each day, I'd have to wash my clothes, using the garden hose and a big metal tub in the backyard, because they'd be saturated with smelly gasoline. The gas was the cheapest in the DC area, and so the lines of cars were enormously long, ergo I'd fill hundreds of cars each day, usually four to eight cars, simultaneously. The gasoline contained large amounts of lead, then. All day, I'd fill car after car, six days a week, constantly getting soaked in the volatile liquid. Periodically, I feel weak and nauseous, but due to my youth, I'd push passed the feelings.

In 2013, the January 3rd issue of *Forbes*, contained an article written by Alex Knapp, discussing the

correlation between lead in the gas and crime. Beginning in the 1960s, the US saw a major increase in violent crime, which peaked in the early 1990s, then slowly declined. The article postulated that the toddlers, who ingested lead in the 40s and 50s, were more likely to become criminals in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. There was a 23 year lag time from the ingestion of lead as a child, to the commission of crimes as an adult. The study clearly showed that as the lead was removed from the gas, over time, the crime rate correspondingly decreased. The correlation was not only seen in the United States, but in many other countries, as well! The damning statistics were indeed impressive. Heavy metals are never too friendly to the cells of the illustrious gray mush. Even today, lead in America's water systems is still a problem. Jut ask the folks living in Flint, Michigan.

This bad behavior thing seemed to make since, considering the potential lead has for damaging decision-making parts of the brain. Anyway, I liked the article, because it seemed to give me an excuse for my bad decisions. *It must have been the lead, not me! Right?* Maybe it was the lead, maybe it was the countless gallons of alcohol, I'd consumed as a kid, perchance it was all the vast amounts of DDT, I'd

bathed in and inhaled, while living in Spain. Conceivably, it was my DNA, but the most probable explanation was that it was my own bad choices made by my own dubious freewill, if there is such a thing as freewill. On the other hand, and as previously mentioned, I've got my doubts about there being any freewill.

In years that followed, I'd be making even worse choices. My lack of empathy, and any moral rectitude, as well as my loss of my Dad's respect, allowed me to descend into delinquency. Looking back, I don't honestly know why I was so foolish and reckless. Nonetheless, old age certainly allows you to more clearly see the errors of your youth, handing you a new form of regret... knowing you wasted so much of your precious life. Still, what is my life worth, anyway, since it's just one among billions, on one small planet among billions? Even one billion times one billion is 10 to the 18th, roughly the grains of sand on earth. Such numbers make winning the lottery look like a sure thing.

Another reason that my folks sent me to military school was that a half dozen of my double-crossing 'friends' formed a consortium of sorts, and visited my parents, while I was on a date at the movies, one

Saturday afternoon. They all came to my home and told my Mom and Dad, that if they (my parents) didn't do something about my racing, I'd probably be dead, soon. My 'friend's' unexpected social call terrorized my dear Mother, while it failed to mildly frighten Dad, it did cause him to consider sending me to military school. Said six friends described in detail the rat-racing, my crash with telephone pole and subsequent temporary amnesia, my hitting and knocking the dump-truck off the road, my drinking, the running of multiple red lights, and various other less than safe things. I was foolish to have told them about those things. Since my Dad had already been to court with me, and knew about the reckless driving, he had no doubt fully believed that my supposed friends were telling him the truth. Even though Dad was glad to have the information my friends imparted, he was shocked that they told on me, since Dad was a man, who could obviously keep a secret. In a very real way, for Dad, keeping a secret was more important than life itself, since in war, one set of loose lips can literally sink an entire ship load of people. Just imagine what could have happened if the Indianapolis had gotten torpedoed before delivering the contents of the bomb to Tinian Island, instead of after.

Later that evening, I came home and my folks had a long, solemn, highly embarrassing, talk with me. The fact that my friends had betrayed me, and my parents knew about my extra curricular activities, mortified, and deeply upset, me. *How could my friends have done this; after all, I have always kept their secrets?* All my life, I had prided myself on living a secret life, apart from my parents, and in one fell swoop, my friends had sold me down the river. The humiliation was so great, that when Mom and Dad were confronting me, I was barely able to listen to what they were actually saying. That evening, I struggled to reduce the damage, which my friends had rained upon me, claiming that my pals were prone to exaggeration. Dad just became angry, and Mom remained hugely worried.

“Have you lost your ever love’n mind? Is that telephone pole story really true?” Dad shouted.

“Yeah, but it wasn’t all that bad.” I lied.

“You had amnesia?”

“I was just a little rattled... that’s all, nothing too serious Dad.”

“What on earth has gotten into you? Why would you want to risk getting killed in a wreck or locked up for

reckless driving?” Mom asked.

“Money!” I reflectively answered, with the truth, and knowing that Dad always was interested in making money.

Mom was just too feminine to understand the workings of the teenage male mind, but not Dad. He wanted to know more about the money, that I’d won while rat racing, since he truly appreciated the appeal of winning money, and while Dad certainly understood the allure and intoxication of adrenaline, I knew that the money would interest him, and make me seem more rational. Figuring that my friends had given Dad some indication about the amount money I’d won, I realized that Dad would want to see the cash, so I quickly invented a lie, to conceal the money in the jar, which was then hidden under the rusty backyard shed, having followed the advice of the sage old Jewish commander.

“Yes, I did it for the money, and I won quite a bit. I kept it in a jar, hidden in the mulch between the bushes in front of the house (a lie). But, a couple of days ago, I checked on it, and the jar was gone (another lie). Somebody must have found it. I think it was the paperboy. You know, sometimes the rolled newspaper lands in the mulch, and he has to get off



his bike and fish it out, and then throw it up on the porch. He may have accidentally stepped on the jar. I should have buried it deeper. On the other hand, maybe someone saw me hiding it. I'm sick about losing all that cash!" I tried to look upset over the loss, and Dad believed me.

"How much did you have in the jar." Dad inquired.

"Nine thousand..." I told the truth, on that count.

"Damn! That's great, Joey! Why didn't you tell me?" Dad had momentarily, transformed from being angry to being impressed, and Mom frowned, scolding Dad for his agreeable reaction. She barked-out her two word reprimand.

"Really, Honey? Don't get distracted by the money! He (me) could have died!"

"Well, it was great, until the jar got taken, Dad." I lied, again.

"Nothing is worth your life, Joey." Mom abruptly chimed in, because it was obvious that Dad was rethinking the racing, in terms of money, and Mom was solidly against it. *My friends have done a number on Mom.*

It was a long confusing night filled with guilt,

concern for my worried Mom, fear of my Dad, and of course, the putrid stench of my never ending lies. The embarrassment of being publicly outed by my friends hurt. There's nothing quite like being a teenager and having some of your sins laid out for parental scrutiny... psychodrama. When I later confronted my friends about their betrayal, they just said they were trying to save my life. I stopped talking to them, and I didn't feel bad, because I'd been good to them. And so, I just made new friends. My entire life has been one of ever changing short-term friends. Even now, in old age, I haven't a single friend that I've know for over a year. As cold as that sounds, that's how my brain is evidently configured. After all, being a military brat, I'd made new friends every couple of years, anyway. I just stopped seeing them, gradually... less and less often, until after a couple of months, I didn't see them ever again, unless I just ran into them by accident. This sort of existence causes you to perceive the rest of the human race as another specie or life form, not better nor worse than myself, but strange beings, who seek-out lasting connections. At the time, I didn't think my racing life had truly been that big a risk, but looking back, I'm amazed I survived, or maybe old age has sapped what little courage, I may have once

possessed.

Fortunately, the consortium of guys, who'd spilled the beans on me, hadn't mentioned my weed smoking, since they knew my Dad would go entirely over-the-top on that subject; besides, they smoked marijuana, too. They'd known that I'd lied, and told Dad that I had stopped the ganja. Later, they told me that when they talked with my parents, he had repeatedly drilled them, to determine if I was still smoking the evil herb. Probably because of my arrogant idiotic uncle, Dad wrongly assumed that weed was actually addictive. Still today, I suspect that the kush had literally saved my life, countering the recklessness of adrenaline and booze; those being the real destructive components of my young life. Weed made me more cautious, and as mentioned, gave me a better feel for the car. On marijuana, driving took on a type of intuitiveness.

Dad had obviously given serious consideration, to what my traitorous friends had revealed to him, since that very same day, he drove to a nearby insurance company, and took-out a life insurance policy on me. If I was going to die in a rat race, Dad was all about cashing in on it. My friends had apparently convinced Dad, my life was about to end. Alive, I was

a major pain in the ass, but dead I'd at least be worth a cool hundred grand, the policy's pay-out.

Considering my young age, the policy was no doubt cheap. In those days, almost anyone could take-out a life insurance policy on someone else. After my friends had done such a bang-up job of selling me down the river, Dad probably looked at the insurance policy, as betting on a sure thing. When it came to money, Dad was always considering the odds; after all, he was a supreme poker player. For years our family had lived-off Dad's poker winnings, and Dad would just deposit his paychecks in the bank. Not only did Dad make money playing poker, but a couple of times, Dad mentioned something about 'trading' various goods during and after the war. He ran a small black market, but I not completely sure about the nature of the goods. Of course, there were those aforementioned planes filled with cases of booze and the little velvet sacks filled with jewels, when we were in Spain. Both the war material factories, and Dad made money off of WWII and the Korean conflict. Although Dad was an officer, he always said that if you wanted to get something done in the Navy, talk to the chiefs, not the officers. He may have been something of a semi legal military smuggler. The reasons why Dad was so focused on

money were three: he'd seen the end of the great depression; he'd made money hauling scrap metal as a kid, and he'd worked in a whorehouse as as a kid and a teenager.

The only reason I knew about the life insurance policy was that I'd applied for a job and to apply I needed to show my birth certificate. While rummaging through my Dad's file cabinet, hunting for the birth certificate, I ran across the policy. At first, I thought it was my Dad's life insurance policy, since we had the same first and last names. When I saw that the middle name of the insured was mine, I assumed the insurance company had simply made a mistake, but then I noticed that both Mom and Dad were listed as the beneficiaries, and of course, there was the recent date of issuance. The date was the day after my friends had sold me down the river to Dad! I'm not saying my Dad was hoping that I'd die, for I'm fairly certain he wasn't, but I'm fairly certain he was thoroughly sick of my ridiculous adolescence, and figured why not bet on the inevitable. He was a hugely empirical man, with a true gambler's spirit.

Never one to question Dad in matters of money, Mom went along with getting my life insurance policy. After all, she'd witnessed the tail-end of the

depression, with countless homeless men, coming to her parent's backdoor, begging for food. Grandma only helped to the white ones.

"I let the niggers take care of the niggers. I ain't the one who brought all those ignorant darkies over here from the dark continent, and it weren't the south that set em free, neither." Grandma once commented, when I questioned her about the depression.

The life insurance policy had truly surprised me; still, I knew that Mom and Dad were pragmatic people, never missing a chance to make or save a penny. Not wanting to deal with an awkward situation, I have never told them about finding the policy, until they were in their eighties, and neither of them denied it. Getting the policy was indeed a reasonable thing to do. Dad just didn't understand, that as a youth, I was virtually invincible. In a weird sort of way, the life insurance policy made me a little bolder, when racing. Sometimes when trying to take a curve a bit faster, or blowing through a red light or stop sign, I'd think that if things went bad, at least Mom and Dad would make a bundle, and so the insurance policy allowed me to be a bit braver; because of that awareness, it's likely that I won a few more races. I lied and told my friends, I'd seen the

light, that they were right, and I'd given-up on rat racing, just in case they decided to speak with my parents, again.

Once I had graduated from military school, Mom told me that Dad had wanted to kick me out on the street, rather than waste the money on the military school. The rat racing had made me even more worthless in his impeccably honest, and highly accomplished mind.

“Your Dad was at his wits end, Joey. He didn't even want to waste the money on sending you to that military school. He said that after you'd been digging ditches for a few years, and living in some shack, you'd probably straighten out.” *Dad's was right!* Certainly, Dad should have given me the boot, Mom's interference with Dad's desire to throw me out, was a major mistake. To this day, I remain certain, that Dad's way of thinking was the best way to go. It would have straightened me out faster, and that's the indisputable truth. Yes, sometimes tough love is the best love. There's nothing quite like standing on your own two feet to make you wise-up, and begin to strive to better yourself. When it came to me, Mom was a kinder more sympathetic person. After a few months of pleading with Dad, Mom persuaded him to

send me away to military school, rather than telling me to hit the bricks.

Had Dad thrown me out, I might have grown-up to be something worthwhile, rather than what you're about to read about in the following texts. Military school doubtlessly saved my life, since dope smoking, drinking, and rat-racing formed the core of my teenage existence. For me, adrenaline was addictive, which no amount of booze or dope could match. Still, when I graduated from the military school, I held the school record for marching the greatest number of punishment hours, called, 'tours.' Albeit, I managed to become an alumnus and with decent grades. In those youthful days, I cared little for learning, and studied just enough to get into college. None of my teachers inspired me, or more than likely, I was just too scattered to appreciate them; but whatever the reason, I didn't possess any bona fide intellectual interest. School was simply an unavoidable necessity, so that I could barely cling to the idea of becoming something of a success. For some people, success is: money, fame, or power; for others, its love, goodness, and light.

A punishment 'tour' was one hour of forced marching in a circle or up and down in a straight



line, in full military uniform, with an M1 rifle over your shoulder. When the muscles would begin to cramp, I'd have to switch the rifle to the other shoulder, but I wasn't allowed to stop marching. The trick was to keep your back extremely vertical, so as to avoid low back strain. If I got five demerits, I was required to march a penance tour. Due to my recalcitrance, I marched hundreds of tours, which seemed like thousands. Marching tours was especially excruciating for me, because it was the ultimate in repetitious boredom.

Most of the time, I marched those boring tours outside, in the late evening, with only the occasional hallucination to provide me was a modicum of relief. When the boredom reached redline, and steam was pouring from my ears, that's when some innocuous object: a bush, a tree root, a section of brick wall, the vines of ivy on the building wall, etc, would become exotically intriguing, something monumentally enthralling, with corresponding feelings. Without losing a step, I'd thereby slip into that other world, while staying in the 'real' world.

In military school, if your bed wasn't made correctly, or your shirt wasn't properly tucked in, if your gig-line (the line formed by your shirt buttons

and your pants' zipper) wasn't perfectly straight, if you failed to salute properly, if your black leather shoes weren't spit-shined to a patent-leather finish, if the brass on your belt buckle wasn't glaringly bright and shiny, if there was dust on your room's baseboard, you be assigned punishment demerits. Using a curse word was considered serious enough that you could get one to five tours, depending on how egregious the word was judged to be. Since I'd been raised around naval personnel, to stop cursing was next to impossible. Going AWOL into town could garner you five to twenty tours, but if you were caught twice, you would be expelled. Possessing or consuming alcohol or any drug, was grounds for immediate expulsion, without possible redress. The rules concerning going AWOL and drinking booze, I often violated, but was lucky not to get caught.

Even my last year at the academy, I marched just two hundred and thirty-one tours, and that was the all-time record for the school. The commandant of the school took pleasure in telling me that. Most of my tours were simply owing to either cursing or not being neat enough, not 'squared away,' as they used to call being overly obsessive. After stuffing my bed with clothes from my closet, about once a week, I'd

sneak into town under the cover of darkness, to have a few beers. There was an older gal, who'd meet me at the bar, after I'd call her from a payphone. Getting caught for beer consumption would have ended my schooling, and so it was plainly a foolish risk. The small corner bar, was frequented mostly by blue collar workers. Being so young, and having that academy haircut, I never went in, but just waited outside for my older female friend.

First, I'd check-out all the vehicles in the parking-lot, to make sure that none of the school faculty were drinking there. I had no phony ID, then. After a few minutes, the woman, who was in her late forties showed-up. She'd go in the bar/package store, and bring-out a cold six pack. We'd go to her house to drink, and as most people know, things proceeded faster with the booze. Lois was a married woman, but her husband was serving the fifth year of his seven year sentence in *James River Correctional Center* in Goochland County, Virginia, one of the oldest prisons in America (1896). According to Lois, her husband had gone to a health club, and taken a wallet and checkbook from another man's gym locker. Later, he'd used the stolen driver's license and checkbook to attempt to buy a car, at a used car lot.

Coincidentally, the man, who ran the used car lot, was shocked when the thieving husband, presented him with his own ID card and check, to purchase the car! Yes, amazingly the car-lot owner was the man, who'd had his wallet and checkbook stolen out of his gym locker! Talk about coincidence!

Since Lois's crook of a husband had an extensive criminal history, he'd plead guilty for a reduced sentence, and was summarily sent packing to prison. Lois used to read me his letters. They were very hot and overly romantic, and so Lois said that her husband was always his best when locked away!

"He's only sweet to me, when he's locked-up, sending that stupid jail-mail."

"Can I borrow your shower?"

"Sure thing, baby."

Every time I ran away from the school, I go to the bar's outside payphone, and call Lois. She'd pick me up, and we'd go to her house for some beer and sex. Before leaving, I'd again shower with her to remove the smell of booze and sex. Before getting in her old rusty 1952 *Ford*, Lois would always hand me some peppermints to carry back to school in my pocket, so if I got caught my alcohol breath might go unnoticed.

She was pretty cool and energetic, but the woman had a serious alcohol problem. That's probably what I found attractive about her. Typically woman alcoholics love sex, and have more dynamic personalities.

Afterwards, she'd drive me in her old jalopy, and drop me off near the school. Kissing her goodbye, I'd climb a fairly steep grassy hill onto the campus, where I'd lay in some vine-like ground-cover. The hill was close to the school's infirmary, so if I were caught, I could have said that I was feeling bad, and was going to the infirmary. Generally it was late night, around four a.m. Laying there, I'd try to spot the roving night security guard with his bright flashlight. After I saw that his light had passed my room, and it was therefore safe, I'd quickly run to my dorm building, quietly open the back door, then silently sneak back into my room. No one at the school, except for my ever faithful roommate, knew I'd been gone. My off campus dealings have remained a secret, until I scribbled them, here.

As with Anna, the Spanish prostitute, I was also ashamed to tell people about Lois, because she was married and so much older than I, as well as a heavy duty alcoholic. Nevertheless, the sex was good. She

and the booze broke the soul crushing boredom of military school.

After nine p.m., the electric power would be cut to all the dorm rooms, so the entire building was left in the dark, ergo it was easy to spot the flashlight of the hall monitor, by looking through the windows of the dorm rooms. In the cold of winter, heat to the room was supplied by steam radiators. I could lookout my window on the third floor and just watch the windows on the other side of the quadrangle. The guard would periodically shine his light in the dorm rooms, so I could easily see the beam of his flashlight and dependably track his whereabouts. As mentioned, deep down inside, I was always afraid of being expelled, since if that happened, any chance at a good life would effectively be over. Completing military school was my last and only hope of going to college, and to graduate, it was required that I finish marching my seemly endless punishment tours.

As mentioned, the tours had to be marched, in full uniform with black hard soled shoes, outside on a giant concrete slab, adjacent to the main building, while shouldering an old, but nearly mint perfect, 30 caliber rifle, the famed M1 *Garand*. As a result, I came to hate the heavy weapon. Nowadays, many

gun enthusiasts, think it is something special, because it was extensively used in WWII. Granted, the weapon is known for its dependability and accuracy, but for me, that heavy rifle will forever stand as a symbol of punishment, and of my life's many failures.

The pleasurable hallucinations were the only good thing about marching the tours. Invariably they were entertaining and intensely colorful, and as mentioned, most frequently they were beautiful female forms. Generally, the worse my life, the better and more frequent my hallucinations. Also, the more tours I marched, the worse my life, the more pleasant my dreams. It's a merciful little inverse correlation, a trade-off of sorts, a hallucinogenic/dream form of karma... bad life equals beautiful hallucinations and cheerful dreams.

The day of my graduation was a nightmare. To complete the tours in time for the ceremonious march across the stage and to receive my diploma, I had to march several tours, some of them in the pouring rain, while the punishment supervisor watched me from inside, through a window, warm and dry. During the rain that day, I used a rubber band to fasten a small plastic bag over the muzzle of

the rifle to keep the water from going down the barrel, and heavy white gun grease on the chamber and trigger assembly, to keep the rain out.

Afterwards, while soaking wet, I had to go to the armory to strip my rifle, clean it, re-oil it, reassemble it, and return it to its assigned spot in the armory's gray wooden gun-rack, where it was subsequently locked in place, by a long plastic covered steel cable, running through the rifles' trigger guards. Though the rifle represented my failures to conform, I nevertheless enjoyed cleaning it, since cleaning guns had been an integral part of my happier childhood in Spain.

Despite the fact, that most people consider the smell to be noxious, to this day, *Hoppes* gun cleaner and gun oil are comforting aromas. Leaving the armory, I ran to shower, dressed, and dashed across campus to the gym, where I walked across the stage to receive my sheepskin. Somewhere along the way, I misplaced it, and so today, I don't know where it is. My parents didn't know about all the punishment tours, and were just glad that I had graduated, although neither came to the ceremony. I couldn't blame them, since it was a two hour drive to the school and I was nothing, if not a major screw-up.

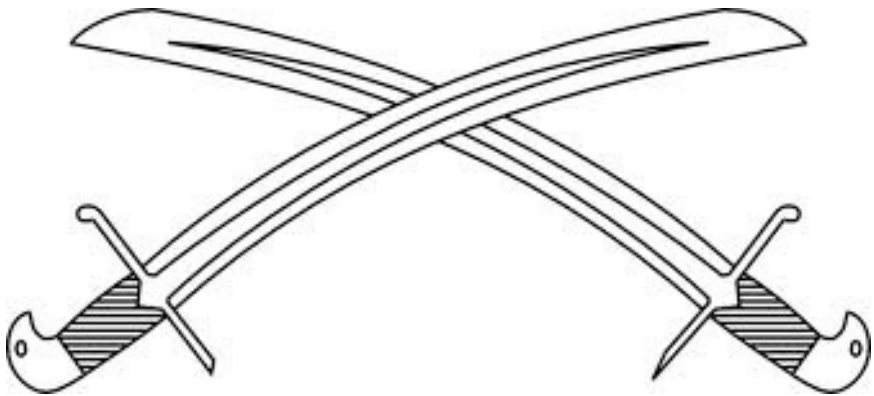


The ceremony was so brief, I felt no genuine pleasure in graduating, other than being able to leave the miserably obsessive compulsive institution, and to continue into higher education; but not because I had any sincere intellectual interest, but just so I'd have some kind of a future... perhaps, a good income, one day. To this day, I've never returned to visit my old military alma mater, and still say, 'good riddance.' It was a place of far too much unreasonable misery, but I suppose it served its purpose, since it turned my life for the better. My moral fiber would rise and fall, numerous times, but always remained subpar; until finally, at age forty my conscience, at long last, began to sputter to life.

“The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself, and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

[OBJ]



**THE SABER PARTY**

Principally owing to my military Dad's influence, I've never allowed myself to become a full-fledged slob, yet sure as hell, I've never been remotely interested in being obsessively neat. It has always seemed to me that both extremes are indicative of various mental aberrations. Why would anyone in a healthy state of mind, want to waste so much of their precious time, worrying about or dealing with the obsession of extreme neatness? It's beyond me why anyone would feel a sense of pride or accomplishment, because every little thing is in its place and squeaky clean. Likewise, the opposing extreme of slovenliness may cause one to misplace and lose track of things, become indolent, and allow pathogen-based diseases to become a concern. For me, the ramifications of either extreme are decidedly unattractive, if not slightly insane.

Although I know some people, who are so obsessed with neatness that they might well have the words, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," inscribed on their polished granite tombstones, or tattooed across their foreheads. Many of the slobes I've known seem to suffer from melancholy, and with age, some have begun to show signs of some form of premature

dementia. On the other hand, my overly neat and clean friends are frequently filled with anxiety, and suffering with things like: manic depression, OCD, germophobia (mysophobia or verminophobia), excessive aggression, impulsivity and control issues, with variances in the concentrations of each. They also seem inflexible, judgmental, opinionated, and surprisingly are typically tend to be right wing ultraconservatives. Such people also seem to think that they're offering you suggestions, when those suggestions are actually more like orders. Their opinion of you drops significantly, if you don't agree with their opinions, or follow their advice. This causes them to miss-out on the beauty of, and to easily reject, creative people.

Both extreme groups, slobs and neat-nicks, seem prone to drug or alcohol problems. The slobs are usually more artistically creative, but unfulfilled and often financially needy, whereas the obsessively neat are more financially successful, but tend to be trapped in obsessive habits/repetitiousness, and lack the ability to try or experience what other people suggest. This can cover many things, from where to go eat a meal, what to read, what show to watch on TV, what to do for entertainment (hiking, swimming,

movies, etc.), to almost anything which involves a choice. Oddly, said people will ask for your opinion, just to appear to be polite, but will usually ignore or reject your suggestion, no matter how splendid your recommendation may be.

Although the above psychiatric observations are purely my subjective suspicions, and I lack any formal psychological training, I still think that those amateurish speculations have some small amount of credence. Even in old age, I'm only mildly concerned about cleaning and neatness... clean enough not to contract some illness, and orderly enough to find things, and do my taxes. I'm not terrified of every little germ, nor of the occasional pile of clutter. After cleaning the car or the house, I feel only the slightest sense of accomplishment. A highly organized mind typically lacks true imagination, since like everything else, imagination must use circuits, which are less commonly employed in the ordered mind. Highly organized people tend to enjoy the socialistic life style of the military, where everything is organized and requires no significant individualism or creative thought.

Though by most standards, I'm clean and mildly neat, I am not nearly as obsessive as are some of my

friends. Yet, I tend not to get sick nearly as often. If I get a cold, it usually last a day. My obsessively clean neat-neck friends, frequently have a cold which lasts for one, two, or three weeks. Perhaps the stress of being forced to realize that, once they are infected with germs, one of their worst fears, stresses them to the max thereby lowering their immunity, and prolonging their illness. The traumatic germ awareness causes them to manufacture and release the stress hormone, cortisol, which suppresses not only their white blood cell counts, but their B-cells' antibody production. Correspondingly, their health goes down the tube, and it's then time for an expensive doctor visit, and the customary antibiotics, and other costly meds.

This stressful awareness of being unable to quickly recover from their 'disease-ridden' state produces yet more cortisol, hence a prolonged illness ensues, a kind of self-perpetuating anxiety-sustained malady. All things considered, I'd say that most slobs typically seem to be psychiatrically better balanced than the overly neat folks. Slobs also seem to be more friendly and accepting of others, whereas the obsessively neat and clean people tend to have distain for slobs, and avoid the sick. They also tend

to dislike poor people and are more racially biased. Never have I wished to belong to either group, though I have friends in each. Once an individual is an adult, it's practically impossible to get a person of either of the two extremes to change their position; the slob remains a slob, and the obsessively neat and clean remains forever the same.

Just like the real military, my military school was a purely socialistic institution, which dogmatically demanded a profound level of compulsive neatness, designed to fill the normal male adolescent brain, with a cornucopia of useless anxiety. If a cadet turned paying homage to the ongoing demand for extreme neatness, the school had ways of supplying the requisite motivation. One would think, that in the interest of psychological normalcy, a school might encourage their students to strive toward existing somewhere in the mid-range on the spectrum of cleanliness and orderliness, rather than wasting time striving to become insanely neat. Believe it or not there were some students who clearly enjoyed striving for neatness, and embraced that neurotic existence.

As you might imagine, military folks are quite often ruled by/concerned about obsessive neatness. My

Dad was a prime example, still he didn't have all the aforementioned mental issues, which usually accompany such foolishness, albeit he pretty much lacked creativity. Most of my Dad's military friends, who were obsessive deceit, highly intelligent, hard working, contributing members of society, but were not creative, nor accepting of other types of people, who failed to fit within their rigorously narrow social parameters. They also tended toward being exceedingly self-centered, if not down right arrogant. Never the less, they are easy to understand, and predict, and therefore get along with, just as you honor their obsessions.

As a child, I recall that such obsessive people were often critical of the English citizens, in general, for having bad teeth, body odor, and for being slow to repair their cities, which were damaged during the WWII bombing. Certainly not all the English had those dental and hygiene traits, but far more did, than did my Dad's friends. Of course, the US didn't endure any such bombing. The highly socialistic US military provides free dental care, and demands body cleanliness. In Germany, where the destruction produced by WWII had been much worse, everything had been completely rebuilt, and the people were



extremely clean and neat, and tended to have good teeth. Still, while the Germans were by-in-large an intelligent people, and industrially accomplished, they didn't seem to have the bright creative genius, which the English possessed. Again, this is just my childhood intuitive opinion, and so it's apt to be erroneous. Nevertheless, that debatable assumption stands to reason, for if your mind is inescapably creative, how much time do you really want to devote to impractical unproductive organizing and cleaning? What would you rather do... push back the frontier of darkness or organize that which is known? If you have trouble deciding how to answer that question, it should likely tell you something about yourself. Subjectively speaking, I'd say about 98 percent of folks go for the latter.

Even though, Germany's population is twenty-five percent greater than that of the UK, nearly one-fourth of the people featured in the famous top 100 living geniuses are resident Brits! In first place is Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the world wide web, and seventh on the list is Stephen Hawking. But, only one German made the list of one hundred big brains. Look at the following site, and draw your own conclusion.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1567544/Top-100-living-geniuses.html>.

Of course, the list may be biased, and I wouldn't be surprised to learn that's true. Nonetheless, it's hard to beat that Englishman, Willy Wigglestick (William Shakespeare) for quality of literature. What's more, I've heard tell that Britain's celebrated JK Rowling, the writer of the *Harry Potter* series and more, went from being unemployed and living on state benefits, to being extremely wealthy, in five years! Rumor has it that she created the magical literary world, while commuting on the train. Moreover, it's difficult to imagine that the British people would follow an obsessive neat-freak psychopathic leader like Adolph Hitler, much like the American people went along with George Bush's idea of killing a million Iraqis, to steal their oil, etc. But see... that's another thing... creative people usually don't care about power. For them, their thrill is not power, but their creativity, to solve the unsolvable and do some good in the process. If a person has a creative mind, things like power and money don't seem as impressive, as they do to persons, who lack such originality. Just

consider Donald Trump. Now there's a true genius! If you don't believe me, just ask him, or look at all his original ideas and creations!

My old military alma mater was founded in the early 1890s. The large three story dormitory, in which I was housed, was erected some time, in the early 1930s. It was a red brick building with white trim, an ivy-covered monstrosity, shaped like a large U, but with two right angled corners, so it was more like a square, missing one side. The gloomy structure contained eight resident halls. Each of the halls housed thirty to thirty-two students, with fifteen to sixteen rooms, with two cadets per tiny room.

If you're doing the math, I realize the eight halls doesn't quite seem accurate, but that's because the western hallway on the bottom floor, the ninth hall so to speak, was instead used for staff offices. The commandant's office was where I was occasionally loudly 'counseled,' about my persistent accumulation of demerits. Down in the building's basement was where the chow-hall, the kitchen, the storage hall, and the armory were located. Three times a day, we'd form-up (stand at attention in lines, by squad and platoon), to undergo uniform inspections; then we'd march downstairs to the chow hall for

breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Each cadet always sat in the same chair.

We were allowed twenty to thirty minutes, to cram down as much food as possible. Having the energy-burning metabolism of a runaway locomotive, I'd hurriedly eat, rarely engaging my fellow cadets in conversation. During the meal, we were required to sit bolt-upright, and eat 'square meals.' This meant that, when the food laden fork or spoon left the plate, said eating instrument was to be lifted straight-up above the plate, till it was level with the diner's mouth, then it (the food) would be transferred horizontally to the diner's mouth in a level fashion. The utensil would then follow the same L-shaped route in reverse to be reloaded from the plate with more food. Eating like that was a giant pain in the ass, and slowed my ability to shovel down adequate calories, in the allotted time. The food wasn't too bad, except for the powdered eggs, and the world's most bitter metallic coffee.

Each of the eight dormitory halls was under the leadership of its most senior cadet, which was generally a lieutenant or a sergeant, and needless to say, obsessively neat. On my hall, our fearless leader was the infamous Lieutenant Morris, a belligerent

compulsive neat-nick, and a tall lean mean drink of water, at just over six foot five, and he was barely seventeen years of age. Lieutenant Morris, our esteemed 'hall commander,' and was responsible for maintaining enormous amounts of anal neatness, for the thirty cadets on 'his' hall. His towering height allowed him to rule by intimidation. However, extraordinary tall teenagers, though striking in appearance, are often sadly lacking in strength, speed, and coordination. Muscle and concomitant nerve growth haven't caught-up, with the lengthy skeletal system. Indeed, such tall youth may look imposing, but often their power and speed hasn't always matched their stature. While there have been a few giant boxers, the vast majority of the heavy weight champions have been between five foot ten and six foot three. Great height is good for basketball, but few other sports.

Most sincerely, I wanted to be a good cadet, yet even though I'd been raised by a father, who was impeccable in almost every way, and a mother who kept the cleanest house in the neighborhood, I found the need for constant over-the-top neatness to be unbearably absurd. Hard as I might try, I could work-up only a moderate interest in things related to

extreme tidiness, just enough to remain clean and orderly enough, so that I could stay healthy and readily keep track of things. Anything beyond that just seemed idiotic. While I was all about showering, brushing my teeth, doing my laundry, sweeping-out and dusting my room, and cleaning the room's sink, I couldn't get motivated about such things as: a spotless uniform, spit-shined shoes, a perfect tightly made bed, clothes precisely folded and ordered in their drawers, squeaky clean base boards and molding, shiny belt buckles, a perfectly straight gign-line, a sharply executed salute, etc. What is the honest point, or absolute necessity, of such things? Such programming is only effective for the left side of the bellcurve, or for those who were abandoned as kids.

Such absurd neatness still seems like some type of alien madness, like washing your car every day, or repainting and re-roofing your house every month, whether it needs it or not... a complete waste of time and energy. When you think about it, all we really have is time, so why waste it spending an hour polishing your belt buckle, or by burning up two hours spit shining a pair of shoes? Honestly... Oh sure, those ridiculous chores teach you to discipline

yourself, but why not develop discipline by doing something good, useful, or interesting, such as reading, working-out, helping your neighbor, or other types of community service? And, why not do this, without the heinous destruction of the student's individuality?

According to all sane standards, my room was clean and well organized, yet it was far from adequate for military school standards. Consequently, I began to accrue a multiplicity of demerits, and to march the corresponding tours. But there was a bigger problem than just marching the tours. My clean, but non-anally spotless, room brought down the overall performance rating of the hall, thereby inviting the ire of the illustrious hall commander, the ultra-anal and ultra-tall, aforementioned obdurate Lieutenant Morris.

While I did receive several warnings from some of my fellow cadets, that our fearless leader was considering giving me the legendary 'saber party.' At the time, I didn't really believe that saber parties existed. The idea of a saber party just sounded too far-fetched, too ridiculous. *It's got to be some kind of a school myth!* I figured such crap was utter fiction, a high school myth, something dreamed-up to haze the

new cadets... a spurious fictional threat to keep them in line by fabricated paranoia. Supposedly, during a saber party the offending cadet was told to 'assume the position,' which meant that he would stand at the foot of the overly painted gray metal bunk-bed, reach-up and hold onto the two top bed corners of the upper bunk, with his pants down around his ankles, then his bare backside would be whipped with the broad side of a saber, by the hall commander.

Supposedly, if the cadet refused to assume the position, he would be jumped by the minions of the hall commander's, and held face down on the floor, where he'd receive an even worse whipping for failing to have assumed the requested position. While I never believed that such a thing would come about, what finally did transpire, started out as a saber party, though it was considerably more painful than a saber whipping. It was destined to happen, because the ego of the normal male teenage brain is configured to accept a fair amount of physical damage, rather than sustain a smidgen of undeserved foolish humiliation.

One evening, my roommate was in the infirmary with a stomach ache, so I had the room to myself,



but without my roommate I had no backup. It was a cold winter's night, and I'd been marching tours in the freezing blowing snow, for the last three hours. My feet felt like two blocks of ice, and so was I looking forward to a warm night's sleep. It was ten minutes before 'lights-out.' {Lights-out meant that one of the faculty would throw a switch, which cut power to all our rooms, but the glorious heat to each room continued throughout the night, furnished by its own individual red hot steam radiator.} I had just finished brushing my teeth, and was wearing only thin white cotton jockey briefs, and was only three steps shy of getting under the warm covers, when the door to my room loudly banged open. Unexpected noises tend to scare me, then a second later I become unreasonably angry... first fear, then comes the rebound anger. It's probably just some weird piece of primitive wiring. Nevertheless, those two parts of the brain are adjacent to each other. In fact nerve cells of those two regions are embedded in each other. One typically inhibits the other, deep within the three pounds of soft gray mush. Since they're mutually inhibitory, when one group fires it turns-off the other, so one can't be both fearful and angry at exactly the same time. When one group runs low on its neurotransmitter, then the other group is more apt

to fire. A prime example might be the time, when I was terrified of Fritz the cat, then right before hitting him in the head with Grandpa's hickory ball-peen hammer, I became angry. Maybe one day there'll be a brain implant capable of stimulating both at the same time, generating combined contrasting emotions, fear and confidence, love and hate, etc. Hypothetically, it would be like holding two contradictory ideas in your head and believing them both to be true: there absolutely is a God, and there's no such thing as God, or that abortion is a good and necessary thing, as well as the idea it's an abomination and a moral outrage.

After my room door loudly banged open, there in my doorway stood the towering red faced obsessive hall commander, Lieutenant Morris. *He's trying to look dangerous!* He was dressed in sweat pants and a classic white wife-beater, and one of the six cadets accompanying him held the saber, which was still in its silvery metal scabbard. The six cadets were standing just behind Lieutenant Morris, further out in the hallway. All of them were sadistically smiling. *Holy shit, the saber party has actually arrived?* The nightmare rumor had actually come true, and at the world's absolute worst time, for I had run eight miles

that afternoon, then had marched three hours of punishment tours in the cold, and so was unreservedly cold and tired.

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me, Morris!” I yelled. *Seven against one... holy shit!*

“Assume the position, cadet!” The ever anal Lt. Morris bellowed at the top of his adolescent lungs, with the sham look which was supposed to convey intimidation. *Seven is too many, and I’m so tired; at least, I’m angry!*

Wrongly, I assumed that the lieutenant was a fraud and lacked the wherewithal to physically react. My initial fear at the sudden sound of my door banging open was still giving way, to my emerging temper. Morris was pointing his right index finger at the end of my gray bunk-bed frame, indicating for me to put my backside to him, drop my pants, and grab the upper bed frame. Though I was never a great fighter, I had been in a several fights, and won about seventy percent of them; I was also a mediocre wrestler on the school’s wrestling team, for which I received my sports letter, and had once beaten the state champ for my weight class, albeit that win was mostly a fluke. Lucky for me, the highly skilled wrestler had accidentally made an elementary mistake, and with

certain momentary glitches in neurochemistry, in cognition, we all do that (make stupid mistakes) on occasion. At the age of 17, Albert Einstein applied (1895) for early admission into the Swiss Federal Polytechnical School (ETH, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule). He passed the math and science portions of the entrance exam, but he failed the rest (history, languages, geography, writing, etc.)! Consequently, he went to a trade school before retaking the exam to be admitted to ETH, one year later.

One thing I'd learned from years of childhood fights (about one per month) and high school wrestling was that no matter how loud a man yelled, or how mean he scrunched-up his face, it made not the slightest difference in the quality of his fight. In my highly limited experience, it is the calm, slightly happy, or sarcastic guy, who brings the most to the fight, probably because they seem to enjoy fighting. My bet is that most of those guys grew-up to become Republicans, and while that sounds like I'm being critical of Republicans, please allow me to say that if I had to go into combat, I'd want to be accompanied by Republicans. On the other hand, if I wanted to avoid an unnecessary war, I'd want to be with a

group of die hard Democrats. Currently, America goes to war when it shouldn't, and doesn't go to war when it should!

Looks of rage on a combatant's face, can be real, but are just as often contrived as a cover for fear, in hopes that it will scare-off their opponent. The tall hall commander's vexed look seemed to say that he was unsure of himself. *He's acting! But, the guys in the hall are a definite problem!* Furthermore, I had never heard of the lieutenant having been in any fight. However, I was definitely afraid to take on the group of seven, so I decided to try to cull-out Morris from the herd, by making a direct challenge to his manhood.

“Okay Morris, I see, by that group you brought with you, that you know you're not man enough to handle me by yourself, you weak ass fool. You must be terrified of me. Why don't you and I settle this? You know... man to man, or are you just too much of a pussy, for that? Are you a pussy Morris? *God this shit is so stupid!*” I crudely and angrily challenged the tall lieutenant. Calling a young male the ‘p word’ was highly effective, and pushed the lieutenant into a personal confrontation, without the help of the other six cadets. Besides, it was almost time for lights-out, I

was tired, and not feeling remotely eloquent.

Since the world has no shortage of evil, and you're no longer in your mom's womb, you'd better learn how to put-up your dukes,.

*Don't Feed The Bulls* by Omar E. Willey

*Let's get this over with, asshole!* Military school was bad enough without the insanity of a saber party. Obviously, Lieutenant Morris wasn't expecting this kind of personal provocation, especially since the tall control freak was a lieutenant, and there were only three other lieutenants in the entire school. There were captains, majors, and colonels, but they were the adult staff members, not cadets. The highest rank a student could attain was lieutenant, and Morris was the senior most lieutenant in the school, hence the top student, in the military since and in height.

At first, Morris just stood there blinking, trying to decide what to do about my effrontery. He turned to look at the gang behind him. They looked at him, as if to say, 'It's your call.' To his credit, Morris suddenly reacted, but without any firm plan, and minus any semblance of fighting technique.

Nevertheless, he was about to seriously hurt me.

As he turned back to face me, he was bending forward and charging me, like a defensive tackle going after the ballcarrier's midsection. He did manage to forcefully ram his left shoulder into my gut. His long legs kept pumping as he drove me backwards across the small dorm room, until my back slammed into the far wall. The impact with the wall wasn't too bad. The slightly flexible sheetrock made a cracking sound, serving to barely cushion my impact. *Thank God, my backbone didn't hit a wooden wall stud.*

But as mentioned, I was only wearing thin white cotton briefs, and so the backs of my legs were completely exposed. Painfully, the back of my butt and my bare upper thighs had been firmly pressed down hard, upon the very hot cast-iron steam radiator, and since it was the dead of winter, the radiator was operating at full tilt and red hot. For a brief instant, it didn't hurt. In fact, for a fraction of a second, it felt like the iron of the radiator was cold. The misnomer disappeared and the pain became nothing short of spectacular. A bucket load of adrenaline gushed forth.

"Aaaaaaahh! Jesus Christ! Get the fuck-off me,

Morris!" I desperately screamed.

"Fuck you, Joey!" He yelled in return.

"Fuck you, Moron!" I rejoined.

Since I was momentarily stunned, and paralyzed with pain, he spun himself around and somehow managed to sit in my lap, grabbing the small porcelain sink with his left hand, while his right hand braced on the wall, he used his heels, to shove his weight backwards, in an effort to more firmly pin my backside to the sizzling blazing hot radiator. The lieutenant's improvisation was agonizing, but fatefully foolish. To this day, I don't know why he made that idiotic backward bracing move. Maybe he just felt that he had to do something to save face, in front of his six onlooking compatriots, who were still standing out in the hallway. This bracing maneuver left him in a dangerously indefensible position. At that point, time down-shifted, ergo it seemed that Morris was moving underwater. Looking around Morris's back, the six cadets appeared like frozen gaping mannequins, two were evilly grinning.

"You're gonna keep this pigsty clean. You hear me, Joeyyyy!" Morris howled, while pressing his considerable weight down on me, for all he was



worth, as my mind silently screamed and my legs, while butt literally sizzled on the iron radiator.

Just as he'd gotten to the last word, my name, and I snapped out of my pain-induced fog, my left hand, reached around his waist and grabbed his family jewels, just inside his loose sweat pants. With every adrenaline inspired pound of grip, I squeezed; my objective being designed to utterly destroy his testicles. Never had I been so inspired!

This caused both his hands to instantly give-up their bracing holds on the sink and the wall. They shot to his groin to try to loosen my steely grip, but after months of wrestling and weight-lifting, not to mention the massive flow of adrenaline coursing through my veins, my grip was like the jaws of a great white. As the lieutenant screamed, his head bent down to better examine my unbreakable grip. That's when I noticed that the right side of his head was conveniently exposed and in ideal strike range, so I hit him with three pile-driving, lightning fast, right hooks, just behind and above his right ear, as I simultaneously continued to grip and twist my left hand, still determinedly mashing his nuts. My teenage fiery ass depended on my getting the obsessive giant off my lap.

It was clear that the first punch had knocked Morris cold, because I felt all his muscles immediately relax, and he stopped trying to pry my fingers loose from his family jewels. He just sat positioned in my lap unconscious, and I continued to hit him, twice more, in the same spot just behind and above his right ear, trying to knock him off of me. I'd have been better off just pushing him, but I was beyond furious. His skull felt like I was hitting a soft volley ball. With the third blow, his head bounced off my fist, just like it was a ball, and his lengthy body fell over to his left. His face hit the sink, then the floor. The lieutenant had folded, like a rag-doll. He'd dropped unconscious, his bones hit the wooden floor, sounding like a gunny sack of big rocks.

Reaching behind for the wall, I pushed myself up and off the burning-hot radiator. My butt and legs came up off the radiator, and besides the pain of the burns, I felt something strange, something gently tugging on the back of my legs, and so I looked behind me, and saw that the skin on the backs of my upper thighs was strung-out about two feet, and swinging like strands of hot gooey cheese. The gently swinging two foot strands of melted skin ran from the back of both my legs to the hot radiator, where

two patches of skin residue continued to sizzle. The sight was riveting. *It smells just like hamburger!* Turning back around I looked at the six guys still standing in the hall, then I spoke.

“Morris has burned the shit out of my legs! Pick-up that piece of shit and get him out of my room!”

Big blisters were forming on my ass and the backs of my thighs. While the fight wasn't exactly world class, it was painfully memorable, and I'd won by knockout. I looked at the unconscious Morris, laying on the hardwood floor, and considered stomping down hard on the side of his long outstretched neck, to break it and kill him, but then thought better. Needless to say, I was filled with hate. While anger still surged inside me, killing wouldn't come till years later. Besides, there were six witnesses.

What next distracted me was a deep aching feeling in my right hand, where I had fractured the knuckle of my little finger, the hand had swollen considerably. Ever since pile-driving Morris's skull, the knuckle has remained twice normal size. Years later, I'd re-fracture that knuckle, in very nearly the same way, only by knocking out an arrogant ambulance attendant, on the beach at Ocean City, Maryland.

The lieutenant's small gang of six came into my room, and looked down at the still unconscious lieutenant and inspected my weird gooey skin for a few seconds. My melted skin was still swinging in long thin strands from the back of my thighs to the hot radiator, and it really did smell like grilled hamburger. The six cadets realized that the saber party had gone too far.

“Get that stupid piece of shit out of my room!” Again, I screamed pointing at the unconscious Morris.

While the six helped Morris to his feet, I ignored the stringy skin and walked to my desk and picked-up a sharpened yellow pencil off the room's study desk, in case they wanted to push things further, but the little group took note of how I was holding the pencil, and let me be. The lieutenant was only unconscious about ten or fifteen-seconds. My legs and ass screamed horrendous amounts of pain. Take it from me, nothing hurts quite like a second degree burn. As Morris came to, the six helped the woozy lieutenant out of my room, without saying anything. He was holding his groin, and saying he was dizzy. None of them offered to help me; after all, I was the one, who wasn't well organized and frequently got the

demerits. In their adolescent minds, the fight was all my fault.

Two small burned patches of my skin, the size of quarters, remained stuck to two columns of the radiator for three of days, afterwards. Later, I was ordered to clean them off, during a morning room inspection, but I refused, and so received eight demerits. The two little cooked pieces of my dermis were like my medals of valor, yet some unknown person finally went in my room, when I was at wrestling practice, and removed them. No one ever reported the ridiculous saber party to the faculty or staff, and I never called my parents about the burns, since I figured that staying in that miserable military school was my only real hope for a decent future.

Lieutenant Morris was escorted through the snow, about three blocks distance to the infirmary, by his six cohorts. From there, he was driven to the hospital on the other side of town, where x-rays showed a thin hairline fracture of his skull's right temporal bone, and a small subdural hematoma. The tall anal lieutenant was kept overnight at the hospital, but came back to the dormitory the following day, seemingly almost good as new. He just walked a little slower and more carefully for a couple of days, due

to his swollen gonads. He told the people at the infirmary and hospital, that he accidentally slipped getting off the toilet, fallen backwards, hitting his head on the wall, while simultaneously smashed his nuts on the hard toilet seat.

As he always did, the lieutenant kept his head shaved so the lump and the bruising behind and above his right ear was clearly visible for several days. As the days passed, it turned from a purplish-blue, to a greenish yellow, before disappearing. Because of the swelling behind his right ear, his military cap didn't sit right on his head, and he often caught me looking at his bruise, but he never offered to press the issue. While a good fight will often bring people together, he and I were far too different, there was no point in trying discuss things with him. Fighting is one thing, and burning a person is another. Even now, I hate him.

After the saber party had left my room, I pulled on my woolen uniform pants and coat, and headed out into the cold blowing snow for the infirmary. The wool of the pants hurt like hell on the burns, so I walked while holding the rough fabric away from the backs my legs and butt, while ambling to the infirmary. Since it was dark outside and no one was

around, I took down my pants to get the painful fabric off my burns, and shuffled along with my pants around my knees. The freezing cold air had made my burns feel so much better, I decided to apply handfuls of the frozen snow right on the burns, and was pleasantly surprised that simple little technique instantly stopped the horrendous pain, but for only for as long as I held the snow on the burns. The application of the icy snow was a Godsend. After standing in the dark, for about thirty minutes, repeatedly putting the snow on the burns, the pain almost left all together. After I started shaking, I again headed for the infirmary.

Right then, I felt like I was living in the land of the lotus eating lunatics, in a realm where young men absurdly obsessed over extreme neatness, to the point that they were willing to fight about that nonsense. Such behavior seemed so unnatural. *How fucking ridiculous!* All that violence, because I wasn't OCD about my room being perfectly neat. I had to put-up with that insanity, for all the crazy things I'd done; the things which had caused me to be sent to military school. *Karma is such a bitch!*

The nurse smeared some sort of medicinal yellow ointment on the burns, taped some gauze over the

wounds, gave me a codeine pill, and sent me back to my room. I'd told her that I lost my balance and accidentally sat down on the radiator. She looked at me, then down at the floor and shook her head, apparently knowing that I was lying; but right then, I could have cared less, and she neither did she. The cadets called her, 'Elephant Lady,' because when she was exasperated, she'd make a remarkable sound, which mildly resembled a trumpeting elephant. She knew something had happened, involving Lt. Morris and I, but she wisely hadn't pursued the issue. No group tends to lie like adolescent males, except for politicians.

Nevertheless, word spread through the students about the saber party. Some of the six guys, who'd accompanied Lt. Morris on the saber party, must have spilled the beans. Later, the gauze on my legs got stuck in the crusty dried exudate of the burns, so I was forced to pull away the scabs, trying to get the gauze free. The burns ended-up getting infected, so the nurse gave me a bottle of antibiotics, which did the trick. For any of you readers, who have taken antibiotics, there is a good chance that you haven't considered the fact that you owe your very life to modern medical science. The majority of conditions,



for which antibiotics are prescribed, would probably not have healed on their own, and the sufferer would have simply died, or been forced to endure a crippling amputation. You may therefore thank your existence to scientists. Doctors stand on the shoulders of scientists and other doctors. Jack shit is owed to Big Pharma! Their only true interest is money, not your health.

In most cases of serious bacterial infection, no pristine diet or combination of herbs will come close to saving you from the pernicious infection; regardless of what some herbalist, reiki master, massage therapist, chiropractor, acupuncturist, dietician, etc., may tell you, or what you saw in some movie. A few of the early antibiotics were discovered quite by accident. There's nothing quite as intellectually interesting as the history of medicine. The art of medicine began as magic, and is still practiced as such by some primitive peoples, medicine men and women, shaman, boil, sangoma, kahuna, etc. You'd be surprised how many people still go to such people, or turn to prayer, for treatment, then eventually have to rely on a hospital. This is often the case, with gullible people, or people who are too mentally slow or lazy to study medicine,

or those with psychiatric issues.

Since I desperately wanted to graduate from military school, I continued to try to keep my room moderately neat, but not nearly well enough for the complete satisfaction of the inspection team each morning, whence I continued to regular receive demerits, which continued to bring down the hall's overall rating. In spite of that, Lt. Morris never again tried to give me a saber party. Had I been given a second saber party, I might have very likely found myself doing something I regretted, in a permanent since! After that painful burn episode with Lieutenant Morris, I kept sharpened pencils hidden around in my room. The idea of a saber party was something dreamed-up by a moronic sick adolescent mind, but it plainly was condoned by the school's adult staff. I wasn't going to kill anybody with a pencil, but I was fairly certain that being stabbed in the arm, leg, or face might deter the saber party.

Anytime a person contemplates an act of violence, they should carefully consider its merits, as well as its' repercussions, and those repercussions can sometimes reach far into the future. Lt. Morris certainly should have given a bit more thought to the saber party. The United States government now

refuses to consider the hundreds of thousands of slaughtered people on one side of the ledger, and is more apt to appreciate the big profits for the military industries. Something tells me that most of the current drone strikes and special operations, while they are supposedly designed to kill terrorists, are pointedly carried-out to create more terrorists, and therefore more business for the various military industries!

The military school and my little dorm room were so depressing, that frequently I slept inside a thirty inch wide copper rain gutter, which ran along the exterior wall of the old brick building, just below the window of my room. On mild nights, I would stuff pillows and clothes under my covers, in case the hall monitor shined his flashlight through the glass panes of the door, and I'd lie down in the rain gutter, and gaze-up at the stars, pretending I was somewhere else. My favorite fantasy was to imagine that I was in a canoe (the walls of rain gutter were sort of like the walls of a metal canoe), drifting down the Amazon, or out in the middle of the Pacific ocean, after escaping a sinking ship, surrounded by sharks, but safe and cozy inside the small metal canoe. Other times, I pretend I was drifting through outer space. Plus, the dark sky

is great for spellbinding hallucinations, and the aforementioned color waves!

Life at military school was depressingly dismal, not just because of the constant regiment of redundant monotony, but because I was surrounded by other students, who like me, were outcasts of their own making, indirectly reminding me of my many mistakes and countless failures. The place was like one quarter school and three quarters penitentiary. In addition, the staff were always quick to remind the students that they were there because of their contentious past. Its great for a young guy's ego to be regularly reminded of what a failure he's been, and there was no denying that my failures were my own, or maybe a tad of my negligence was due to the previously mentioned lead in the gasoline.

The school barely remained satisfied with my marching the resultant tours for my less than impeccably tidy room, periodic cursing, messy uniform, etc.; after all, I had not phoned my folks to report my burns. Fifty years later, I still fail to see why one should waste valuable time, being overly concerned about obsessive neatness. My lovely daughter is a bit of a slob, but only a bit; still, I couldn't love her more.

That afternoon after the graduation ceremony, I went back to my miserable little room for the last time, packed two duffel bags, and walked to the nearby town to board the *Greyhound* bus for home. Before getting on board, I threw the duffel bag, which contained all my uniform clothes, hats, and shoes into a rusty trash barrel. Later that evening, Dad picked me up at the bus terminal, in Alexandria, Virginia. He'd brought along one of his old Navy buddies, a commander who flew antisubmarine patrols, in P2V Neptune bombers. The commander was spending the night at our house, then he was off the next morning, to fly down to Jacksonville.

When we got home, Mom was at a meeting with her volunteer group, who helped take care of mentally challenged adults. Dad, the commander, and I, opened a bottle of bourbon, drank, relaxed, and talked. Mostly, I listened. At first, Dad and his pilot buddy politely inquired about my graduation and plans to attend college, then they discussed old flying issues, and how I loved to listen. We'd nearly finished half the fifth, when the phone rang and Dad had to go into the Washington Navy Yard, around 8th street, in southeast DC, for some secret emergency; probably something to do with one of the

high altitude Dragon Ladies. Dad was deadly serious about recon flights, and never forgave Francis Gary Powers for not taking that capsule. It was June of 1966, and there was some big counteroffensive going on in Vietnam, and Dad had something to do with coordinating the reconnaissance flights. He said he'd be back as soon as he could, and that was never certain. Dad never had any problem driving or working with alcohol coursing through his veins. No matter how much he drank, he hardly changed.

The visiting commander stretched-out on the couch, and I poured us another drink, and sat in Dad's lounge chair. It felt great to be drinking and to be done with the horrible military school. At that time, freed of military school, I felt like a million tons had been lifted off my chest. To continue the conversation, I asked him questions about flying sub patrol. My intention was not to interrogate; I was simply interested. Pilots never lack for stories about flying, especially when drinking, and I never tried of listening; it meant vicarious adrenaline.

The commander told me that the antisubmarine patrol bombers often carried nukes aboard the plane, and that Dad had flown missions with nukes on board his plane, though he never dropped one. Still, I

was shocked to learn of that fact. That meant that nuclear bombs were regularly being flown hither and yon, without the civilian world knowing beans about it. The commander said that it was no big deal, because the odds were quite good the nuke wouldn't detonate, even during a crash.

The need for nukes on antisubmarine patrols was mandated by the need to be able to knock-out enemy subs, which might be carrying multiple long range ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles), with nuclear warheads. The first US model of an underwater launch-able missile went to sea in late 1960, and by 1964 said missiles were quite advanced and fairly accurate. A little more than a month after the United States successfully launched (1960) our first undersea missile, the Soviets made their first underwater launch in the White Sea. Sub launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) soon became the world's most deadly threat, and still are, barring the outer space nuclear platforms, or nukes that have been covertly buried in strategic locations. But the Russians beat us in launching and detonating a SLBM.

They launched and exploded an R-13 at their Arctic test range (Novaya Zemlya) in 1961. The US,

if not most of the world, went completely paranoid, about submarine launched nuclear missiles. As time passed, both the US and Russia had subs which carried intercontinental nuclear ballistic missiles. One stealth Russian sub was capable of destroying several US cities, and so represented the greatest threat, in the event of all-out thermonuclear war. Now days, the Russians have the Delta IV subs, which carry sixteen R-29RMU sienna liquid-fueled missiles, and each missiles contains four independently targetable reentry vehicles, that means one sub can nail 64 cities. That's why the anti-sub aircraft need to carry nukes. All these weapons are big money makers for the military industries. You've got to admit that it's a bit weird to be making money by making things designed to destroy earth. If just a small fraction of those subs managed to launch, nuclear winter would be darker than a blackhole.

The land-based missiles were far more predictable, even those carried on mobile trucks and railroad launchers, since they have further to travel before they impact... more time for the antiballistic missiles, or outer space lasers, or particle beam weapons, aircraft-born lasers, to locate and successfully blow them up. Moreover, such land-



based missiles are easily spotted and accounted for by satellite imagery, before they launch, which is not the case, for those launched from nuclear submarines. Of course, all these measures seem ridiculous, since little prevents one country from burying nukes in another country, to then be detonated, when need be, by a complex radio signal.

Ballistic subs were elusive, and they could get in close to the US mainland, and hide in the many undersea canyons, or duck under thermoclines. Moreover, they could hide in ice pockets, under the arctic ice, bordering the open water, for a quick sudden deployment. And so, if the fatal balloon went up, it was imperative that the patrol bombers be able to quickly find and kill said dead-dealing subs, before they could launch their nuclear missiles. Once the missiles are air-born, they're soon hauling ass, moving around 6000 miles per hours. Therefore, the US kept a near constant tract of the subs, via antisubmarine warfare patrols. Even the temporary loss of one Russian submarine could cost someone their career. Antisubmarine patrol bombers stayed on top of them, 24 hours a day, for 365 days every year. Pilots and planes were constantly rotated. The destructive effects of an antisubmarine nuclear bomb

set-off underwater are quite far reaching, and better insured the lethal sub's total destruction, and so again, it was important that the patrol bombers secretly carried atomic bombs, and the American populace knew nothing about that, yet there I was not yet seventeen, when the commander clued me in to that engaging little nuclear fact. *The world's insane!*

To tract a sub, the anti-submarine patrol bomber would drop various numbers of sonar buoys on the surface of the ocean, which would then emit pings, and listen for the bounce-back from the sub. Some of the buoys are just good listeners and don't need the ping. The original idea was that the ping signals would bounce off the sub and back to the sonar buoys, which would then transmit said depth and directional information to the orbiting plane. By strategically deploying such buoys, the plane could closely 'approximate' the location of the sub. But the subs were constantly making directional changes, and as stated, ducking under thermoclines (depths where the water temperature drastically changed, which could often distort the sonar signals) and behind and beneath canyon walls, and ice, to avoid detection. It was an ongoing game of thermonuclear cat and mouse. Anything to break the boredom of

life, I suppose. In certain bodies of water, the submarines can also use haloclines (from the Greek *hals*, meaning salt, and *klinein*, meaning ‘to slope.’). The phenomenon is caused by a salinity gradient in the water, because salt affects the density of the seawater. An increase in salt of one kilogram per cubic meter, increases the water’s density by around 0.7 kilograms per cubic meter, and can produce a marked effect on the signals used to identify the presence of a submarine.

In the vast open ocean, the thermoclines are sort of like invisible reflective blankets, separating the upper mixed layer of warmer water from the calm deep colder water. Thin layers of water, where the Brownian Movement of the water molecules, above and below, are immensely different. Depending on the season, the tides, the latitude, and the turbulent wind mixing, the sun spots, thermoclines may be a varying feature of the body of water in which they occur. They may also form temporarily in response to radiative heating and cooling of surface waters, during the day and night, and so cloud cover also plays into thermoclines. The antisubmarine bombers often had to operate at low altitude, and their missions could not be stopped just because of storms.

That's some food for thought, if you're a pilot.

The thermocline would often drastically distort the return sonar bounce, so even with the expensive, and technologically advanced buoys, it could be difficult to get a dependable fix on a highly lethal sub, hence the need for the ever formidable nuke onboard the P2V, and probably now on the P3, patrol bombers. Consequently, nukes were being regularly flown, hither and yon, without your knowledge. The visiting inebriated commander also explained to me that some of the nuclear bombs were adjustable, in that by throwing switches or pressing certain buttons or moving levers on the bomb, one could adjust the amount of nuclear material, which entered into the explosion, and thereby change the yield or force of the weapon. The unused portion of the radioactive material would just be left scattered on the ocean floor. You know the old saying about close only counts in horseshoes? Well, the saying works even better with large atomic weapons.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed\\_P-2\\_Neptune](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_P-2_Neptune)

Moreover, the US has planted listening devices all over the floors of the oceans, seas, in certain rivers, and even in the Great Lakes. The operational watchword of submarine warfare is 'stealth.' Of course, that also applies to various other forms of warfare, especially the sleuth aircraft. In appearance, the F-117, and the Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit have been the most stealth looking of all aircraft, based on the Have Blue technology. They were the first operational aircraft to be designed around stealth technology, so the F-117 lacked power. The maiden flight of the Nighthawk was in 1981, and the plane achieved its initial operating capability status in 1983. Of course, this makes one wonder what secret weapon in the world of stealth now, and how much of our money is being goggled-up, and at what sacrifice to the citizens of the United States.

But like I've often said, why don't antagonists countries simply bury nukes in their adversaries backyards: in their cities, or next to strategically important military bases? Bury them in the ground. Put them in the newly poured cement of building foundations. Brick them up in the walls of tunnels, or sewer systems, and if it's really necessary, leave some wire attached to a metal structure to serve as the

receiving antenna. It can't be too hard to do; after all, the drug cartels smuggle in thousands of tons of cocaine into the US, every year. A huge nuke, can be made to weigh less than two hundred pounds, and a small nuke can be fit in a briefcase. So why the costly ICBMs, Reagan's Star Wars, all the antiballistic missiles, nuclear subs, etc.? The answer just might be that the respective military industrial complexes wouldn't make all that money... your tax money, and the money our wars steal, from the 'enemy' countries. Without cold and hot wars and conflicts, they wouldn't sell as many: missile and attack subs, ICBMs, missile silos, antiballistic missiles, long range bomber aircraft, rocket propellents, atomic payloads, outer space platforms, cruise missiles, medium range missiles, etc. On the other hand, countries with poorer economies, as well as wealthy economies, may have already buried bombs in the United States: North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, China, Russia, etc. It would be hard to prove who had buried the bomb had been buried, if you used stolen radioactive material, so it couldn't be effectively traced. A small conventional bomb could be used as an example, a deterrent. Call the State Department of the target country, then detonate the bomb, then tell them that you've also buried several atomic weapon in the

same manner. The government might simply tell the public that a gasoline station blew. For that matter, a sailboat with the correct markings, can sail into any US harbor: LA, Seattle, San Diego, Miami, Jacksonville, Norfolk, New York, Fort Walton Beach, Chicago, etc. One could even sail up the Chesapeake Bay, and make a left turn into the Potomac River, then sail up to the nation's capital, and drop anchor next to the pentagon. A cheap unassuming little ten foot sailboat could easily do the job.

You've got to admit, I can't be the only person, who's thought of this. The psychological threat created by unknown numbers of hidden/buried atomic bombs might inflict some major public paranoia. Think of the effect such a likelihood would have on certain types of overly anxious people, i.e., patients with various psychiatric conditions. Some folks might move away from larger cities, or pack-up and leave their home, if it's near a military installation, assuming that those are the most likely places to be vaporized. It's so ridiculously easy to hide a bomb, that I find it impossible to imagine that it hasn't already been done! My bet is that there are nukes buried in many strategic locations, within the United States, just waiting for some unique radio

signal to detonate them. A super complex signal would be safe and dependably detonate the device. How many times has the beeper on your keychain, accidentally caused another car in the parking lot to be unlocked? None? And, a car remote emits a fairly uncomplicated signal; at least in comparison to what could be bounced off a satellite. How hard could this evil be?

The Russian-American cold war was by far the largest corporate money maker in the history of the entire planet, yet now, hardly anyone ever mentions it. Trillions of dollars, without a deceit legacy. The politicians in both countries were working hard, for the industries which manufacture all those many highly advanced war materials. They'll do it again. To get public support, they must stir-up fear in the minds of the naive citizens; they pump-up the paranoia through the media, so the people want to support the building a huge stockpile of 'protective' armaments. Because of said cold war, both the Russian and the United States military industries have pocketed some massive amounts coin. Depending on who you talk with, there have been about twelve recessions in the United States, since 1945, and each time where did the money go?



Massive amounts of military arms means very little money for Joe Schmoe's education and medical research.

People inevitably seem to chalk-up those terrifying economic meltdowns to nebulous things like: banking practices, employment issues, cost of living elevations, market fluctuations, OPEC rigs the price of oil, welfare, people not paying their mortgages, etc. While it is true that such things are involved, for some reason, most economist overlook the very simple and obvious fact that much, if not the vast majority of the country's wealth just went into the production of massive amounts for extremely expensive weapons, and the equipment it takes to maintain, transport, and effectively deploy them: ungodly amounts of various types of fuel, troop support costs, aircraft carriers (\$13 billion each), cruisers (over \$1-3 billion each), destroyers, frigates, landing craft, bombers, jet fighters, helicopters, tanks, submarines, missile maintenance, ammunition, artillery, missile silos, satellites, covert space shuttle missions, maintenance of outer space weapons platforms (atomic, laser, and particle beam), outer space communication and spy satellite maintenance, and the list goes on and on. All those things which

consumed mountainous amounts of your tax money. The above listed items are anything but cheap or benign, and great numbers of them are regularly manufactured. Ah, if only there were no religions, no for profit pharmaceutical companies, no coal burning generators, no military industries, and no war! Wonder what the world would be like without those things. While that speculation seems so pie-in-the-sky; in truth, it is so easily to accomplish those things; that is, if the public were better educated and actually in control of their respective government, or their political party.

A study conducted in 1998 speculated that just the nuclear forces of the cold war cost the United States more than \$2 trillion dollars. The cost of the nuke subs was one-third of that \$2T (\$600B). It kind of drives the point home, when you realize that one trillion is a thousand billions, or it's a million millions. And consider the fact that none of these highly expensive weapons have really been put to any kind of extensive use, so much money, time, and trouble and so little actual tactical use. Where mutually assured destruction supposedly keeps us safe, it's a profound and ungodly waste of money and human life! And the people of Russia and United

States actually believe that having large numbers of extremely expensive weapons it was necessary! Ah, if only psychopaths run the world governments. Just try to imagine the following list of people as being kind and loving personalities: Theresa Mary May, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Kim Jong-un, Angela Merkel, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Benjamin Netanyahu, Hassan Rouhani, etc. Just look at their videos, with the sound off, then try to gauge their egos for yourself, from only their facial expressions, ignore their words. The words are just carefully crafted subterfuge. Just look at them as a person, and not a leader.

When you figure-in the costs of all massive amounts of non-nuclear military stuff, the price of the cold war becomes ungodly. And, we never used even one percent of the stuff. Keeping that in mind, and the fact that Russia went bankrupt, trying to keep-up with their half of the cold war build-up, and then they had to start selling-off massive amounts of their military hardware, it appears that all that cold war money was simply a gargantuan waste, except that it made certain industries extremely wealthy, and it provided lots of jobs, while periodically threatening to destroy the entire earth. And consider

the fact, when Russia was nearly completely disarmed and we could have easily destroyed them, and the Berlin wall was destroyed. The US did nothing but allow them to start to rebuild their arsenal! Around 1962, Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy almost made thermonuclear war a reality, and then there were a few more close calls, before Russia finally went broke. I think the Russians were still mad about their giant contributions toward WWII. Their cold winters are the worst. One accidental close call was extremely close (below).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/  
Stanislav\\_Petrov](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanislaw_Petrov)

Some future US president, who becomes just one more puppet of the military industrialists, will no doubt attempt to start another hot or cold war, under the pretense that he or she is being patriotic. If Trump wins, my bet is he'll either start a brand new war, or he'll threaten to start a war. Probably because of their fledgling nuke program, he'll start-up something with North Korea (with Russia and China rattling their sabers in support of the one country which only exists to support its leader) and therefore

begin a cold war, and he'll probably also prolong the US involvement in Iran and Afghanistan. Then, there's the corrupt country of Venezuela, and it's just across the Caribbean. If Hillary wins, she'll certainly pass legislation to favor the banks and Wall Street crooks, and all the while, she'll likely keep us in Iraq (Isis) and Afghanistan (Taliban), and maybe Syria. Trump will probably bail on Syria because he loves Russia. Its nothing short of depressingly shocking, that the American citizens support such people, yet voted-out the highly capable and intelligent man, Senator Bernie Sanders. What can you expect with America's gargantuan lack of quality education?

When I asked Dad about the atomic bombs, supposedly being carried aboard the anti-submarine patrol bombers (P2Vs), he just looked mildly irritated and calmly walked away, as if I hadn't spoken. He never clued me in, and died with his secrets. Frequently, I chalked-up his unwillingness to share more of his life with me, because I was unworthy, and largely that was probably an accurate assessment. He passed away in a dark little room of a nursing home, with his lungs slowly filling-up because of pneumonia, but for all his life's efforts to preserve our nation, there was no one from the

government there to aid him, to see him off. He hardly told me anything about combat. I had to find-out secondhand, from his old friends, and a few yellowed newspaper clippings. Dad hardly discussed the wars. He was an unassuming man, who was all about things like integrity, courage, and keeping secrets. He didn't mind dying. In a very real way, 'Pneumonia is an old man's friend.' He just seemed to get shorter and shorter breaths, without suffering. Finally, he passed-out and then died.

[https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/  
images?p = photo + of + bomber + neptune&fr = yfp-  
t&imgurl = https%3A%2F%2Fs-media-cache-  
ak0.pinimg.com%2F736x%2F3b%2F6a  
%2F02%2F3b6a027256968d86b072709983c96115--  
neptune-modeling.jpg#id = 5&iurl = https%3A%2F  
%2Fs-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com%2F736x%2F3b  
%2F6a  
%2F02%2F3b6a027256968d86b072709983c96115--  
neptune-modeling.jpg&action = click](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?p=photo+of+bomber+neptune&fr=yfp-t&imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fs-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com%2F736x%2F3b%2F6a%2F02%2F3b6a027256968d86b072709983c96115--neptune-modeling.jpg#id=5&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fs-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com%2F736x%2F3b%2F6a%2F02%2F3b6a027256968d86b072709983c96115--neptune-modeling.jpg&action=click)